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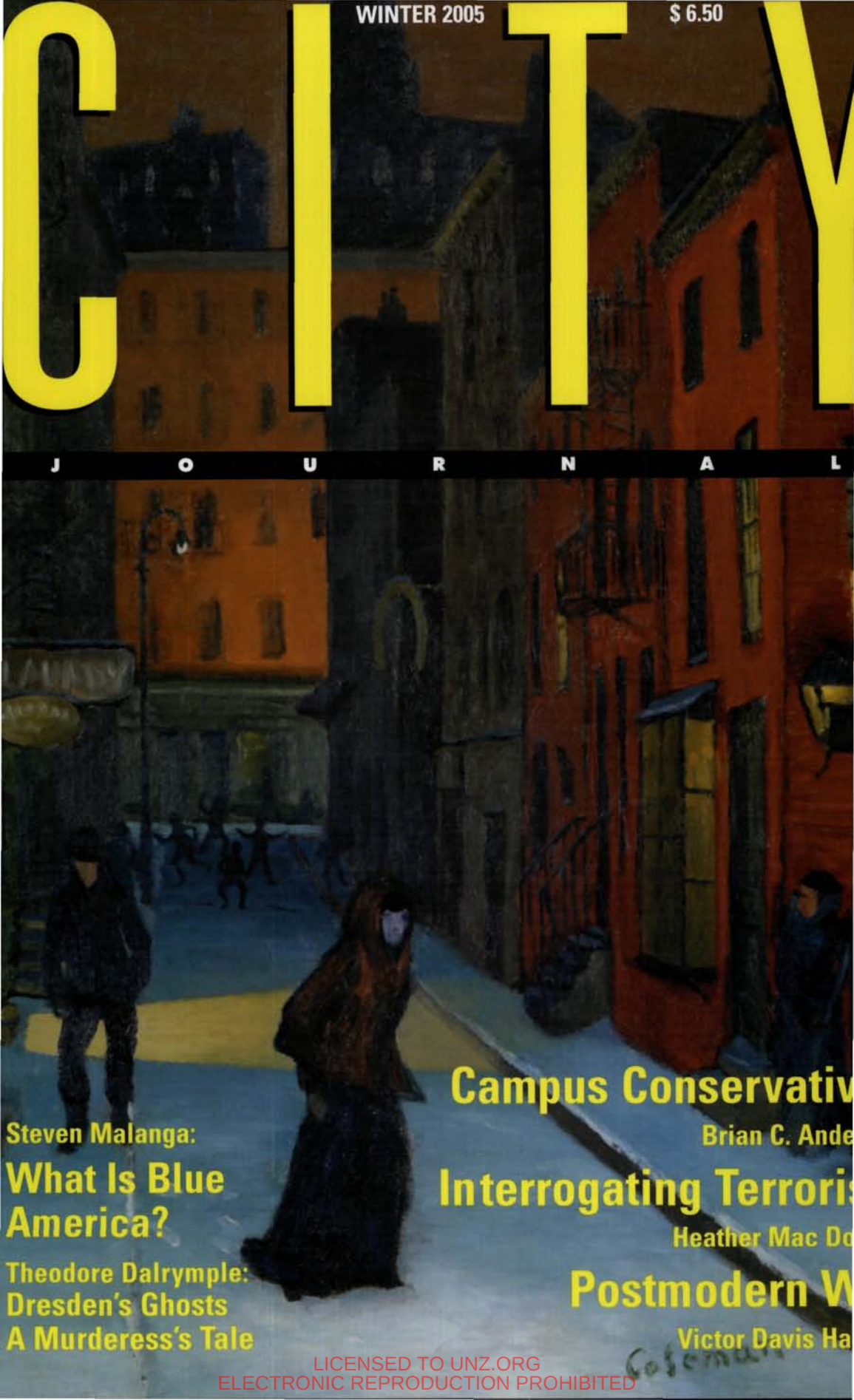

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Theodore Dalrymple:
Dresden's Ghosts
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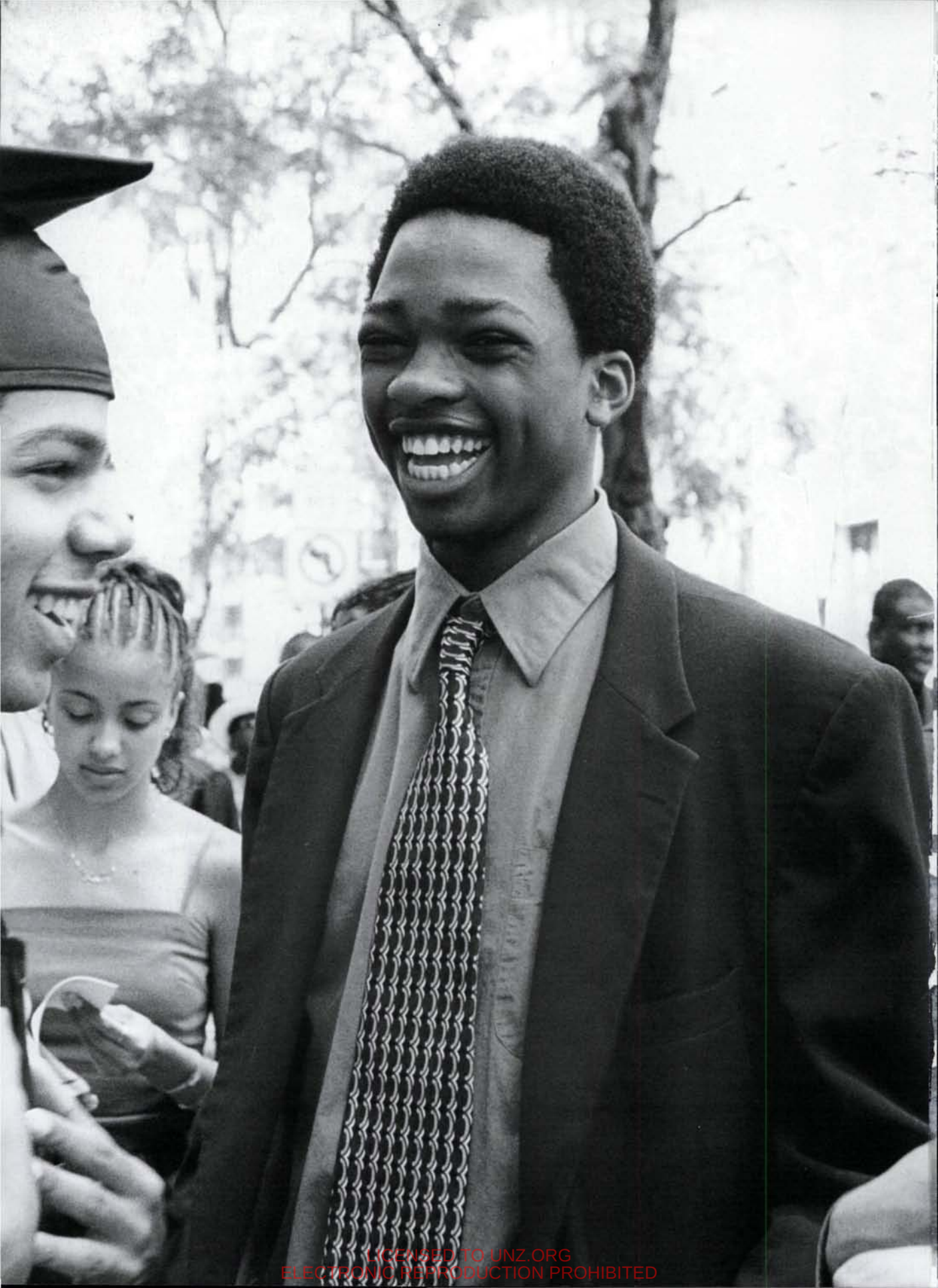
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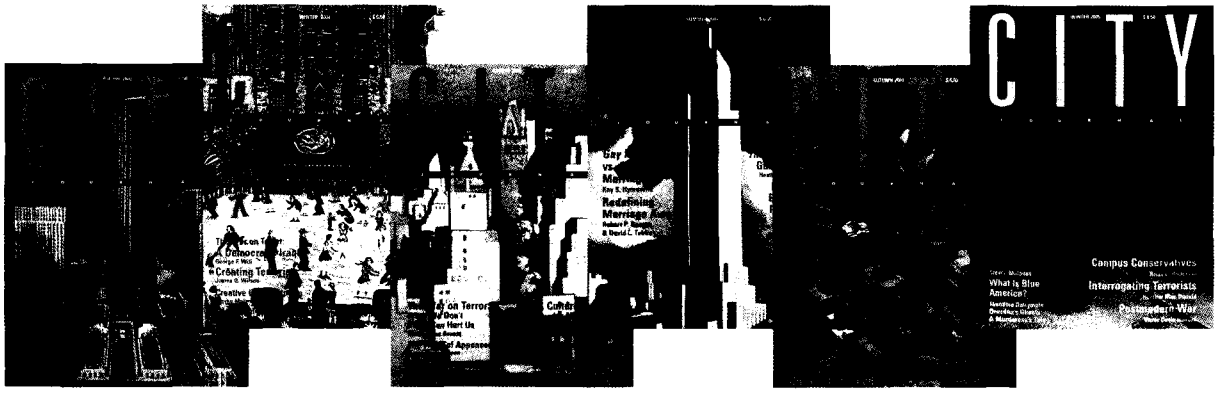

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In Prospect

Conservatives sometimes have trouble taking yes for an answer, but in the culture wars, we no longer have our backs to the wall in a hopeless rearguard action. In fact, many Americans now share our worldview, as the 2004 election made clear. In the mainstream press and the universities it's still 1968, of course, and *City Journal* has always believed that these would be the last two redoubts of the sixties cultural revolution. But as senior editor Brian C. Anderson showed in "We're Not Losing the Culture Wars Anymore" (Autumn 2003), the *New York Times*, Random House, and CBS have lost their monopoly on news and opinion, and today represent only one extreme, albeit a very powerful one, of what has become a much broader media spectrum. And now, as Anderson reports in "On Campus, Conservatives Talk Back" (page 12), the very last bastion of knee-jerk leftist political correctness, academe, is growing less monolithic. Not the faculty, of course; but today's students are much less radical than their sixties-generation profs, and, thanks to their own efforts, reinforced by outside conservative institutions, they have initiated a two-way conversation even in Ivy League institutions, leavening colleges with some of the intellectual diversity they have hitherto shunned. It is a development conservatives should acknowledge, applaud—and build upon. For a very different, and highly entertaining, insight into that cultural shift, don't miss Kay S. Hymowitz's "Capitalists on Steroids" on page 56.

Two of this issue's stories discuss the actual war against terror, but even here the culture wars play a part. As Heather Mac Donald demonstrates in "How to Interrogate Terrorists" on page 24, the widely accepted belief that the Abu Ghraib scandal sprang from our military's standard war-on-terror interrogation procedures—a belief nurtured to discredit both the war and our good faith in fighting it—is wholly a myth. In fact, our interrogators take a fastidiously mild approach—too mild, Mac Donald makes clear. But, of course, most of those who promote the myth that we condone and practice torture are ex–sixties radicals for whom every war is Vietnam, and every action My Lai.

Certainly our enemies are aware of how our culture's love of self-criticism and intellectual freedom, central to Western democracy's strength, can be transformed into weakness by propaganda campaigns that fan antiwar dissent, as Victor Davis Hanson shows in "Postmodern War" (page 36). They can't defeat us on the conventional battlefield, Hanson says, but they can triumph on the TV screen, by (for instance) making us look like butchers and torturers—which, as the Vietnam generation knows, can be enough.

Though New Left thinking still influences our politics, if decreasingly, Steven Malanga points out in "The Real Engine of Blue America" (page 66) the emergence of an increasingly powerful *New* New Left, a coalition of public-sector unions and publicly supported private social services and hospital workers, whose agenda is always bigger government, more services, and more taxes—not out of any altruistic motive but out of self-interest. These tax eaters are increasingly the most powerful political force in the urban areas that the district-by-district electoral map shows really *are* "Blue" America, and they are growing ever more powerful in the national Democratic Party. What's more, observes Nicole Gelinas in "Corporate America's New Stealth Raiders" (page 74), the union officials and left-wing pols who run the giant public-sector pension funds have increasingly succeeded in using shareholder activism to impose the New New Left agenda upon the nation's corporations whose shares the funds own—to the detriment of common shareholder interest. These New New Left interests have completely taken over the government of New York State, and, as Malanga argues in "The Empire State's Quickest Route to Reform" (page 82), a strong governor, given the inherent power of the office, is the best hope taxpayers have of restoring a focus on the public interest.

Finally, *City Journal* stories strive to transcend journalism and become literature; and you'll find that Theodore Dalrymple's two extraordinary articles, "The Specters Haunting Dresden" (page 94) and "A Murderess's Tale" (page 104) triumphantly succeed in doing just that.

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oundings

Tyrannous Taxation

New York State's business climate is the nation's worst.

Mired in recession in 2003, New York State raised taxes by $5.4 billion—and that came on top of a $1.8 billion New York City tax hike, described by Mayor Michael Bloomberg as part of the cost of doing business in a "premium" place like Gotham. Meanwhile, Kansas got through its recession-induced budget woes without raising taxes; instead, it cut spending and passed productivity reforms that saved $1 billion.

The stark contrast between those two budgetary approaches helps explain why a new Pacific Research Institute and *Forbes* magazine survey praises Kansas as the state with the nation's best business climate and rates "premium" New York as the worst. The study measured the "economic freedom" of states, defined as "the right of an individual to keep what he earns, produce what he wants, and compete in . . . markets of his choosing." The economies of freer states prosper from the choices that individuals and businesses make with their own money; economically unfree states turn more money over to the government, which invariably uses it less efficiently and productively than the market does.

New York scored at or near the bottom in almost every one of the study's indicators of economic freedom. It has the biggest government and spends the most on welfare programs of any state, for instance—largesse it supports by levying sky-high taxes. It also has one of the most highly regulated business environments in the U.S. The overall result is an "oppression tax," the researchers say, that reduces New Yorkers' earning power by about $2,400 per capita annually—a $45 billion annual penalty to the state economy.

Less economic freedom means fewer jobs. Since the late 1950s, when it embarked on its big-government path, New York has consistently lagged behind the national economy and the economies of fast-growing states like Kansas in producing new employment (Kansas's rate of job growth has nearly tripled New York's). If its economy had grown at merely the national average over that period, New York would have roughly 4.5 million more jobs than it does today. The only consolation New Yorkers can take from the study is that nearby states are just as toxic to business. Joining the Empire State near the bottom of the freedom index are Connecticut (48), Pennsylvania (45), New Jersey (42), and Massachusetts (41).

Revealingly, a map of the U.S. color-coded by how states rank in economic freedom would look much like today's political map. The Blue states that went heavily Democratic—in the Northeast, industrial Midwest, and California—all score low on economic freedom. The Red states of the South and the Central Plains rank highest.

People and businesses have been fleeing the Blue states for economically freer climes, leading to lost congressional seats. The two bottom states on the economic-freedom index, New York and California, also showed the greatest net loss of domestic residents in the last census. As long as people can pursue their economic interests by going where the opportunity is, that drain will continue. —*Steven Malanga*

Play Balco!

The corruption of the Summer Game

Once upon an era, baseball-team owners exploited the players.

Then the players unionized, acquired agents, and exploited the owners.

Then, in an epochal labor-and-management accord, the two sides stopped exploiting each other—and began exploiting the fans.

Ballplayers receive absurdly inflated wages. Back-up catchers can gross over $1 million a year, and headliners can own private planes. Does all this revenue come out of owners pockets? Hardly. It derives from: a) broadcast rights; b) licensing fees for costly caps and T-shirts with the team logo; c) ludicrously expensive refreshments at the park; and d) ever-pricier tickets.

Consumers complain, but at showtime, they fork over the cash. What they expect in return, though, are monster shots to the second tier, home-run races like the one in 1998 between Sammy Sosa and Mark McGwire that saw both men break Babe Ruth's season record, and bulked-up superstars like Barry Bonds, now closing in on Hank Aaron's career mark of 755 home runs.

Once upon an era, batters cheated by corking

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their bats or taking uppers to keep themselves stimulated. That seems sandlot stuff these days. A grand jury recently investigated professional baseball players' use of anabolic steroids and human growth hormone developed by the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative (Balco). According to the leaked testimony of Yankees Jason Giambi and Gary Sheffield, and on-the-record statements by Jose Canseco and the late Ken Caminiti, among others, the use of such banned compounds now runs rampant in both the American and National Leagues. The drugs build muscle tissue, enabling athletes to perform unprecedented exploits on the field. So what if they're feats of clay? The people in the stands are happy, the athletes win fat contracts, and the owners rake in the money. What's wrong with that?

The risks, for starters. Athletes injecting such substances can irreparably damage their livers and hearts and experience violent mood swings. Giambi has suffered dramatic weight loss and a pituitary-gland tumor. Caminiti died at 41. Lyle Alzado, an outstanding pass-rushing football star, died at 42, after years of taking steroids. "We were not born to be 300 pounds or jump 30 feet," he said in 1992, at the bitter end of his life. "My hair's gone, I wobble when I walk, and have to hold on to someone for support, and I have trouble remembering things. My last wish? That no one else ever dies this way." Since then, however, more *have* died that way, most of them unrecognizable names—kids who wanted, quite literally, to be big men on the playground or campus.

And then there's the little matter of the Summer Game. Baseball is statistic-mad. Numbers break down into columns of infinite refinement: total bases, slugging percentage, on-base percentage, and on and on. But baseball of late has become a game of home runs *über alles*. The big roar—and the big money—comes from round-trippers, and there are a lot more hit now. Some say the rise is due to thin pitching talent. Or maybe it results from bringing outfield fences closer to home plate, or from the fact that ballplayers are stronger than in the past, simply because American boys eat better and train harder than their fathers did.

Well, now we know better. All the above may be true, but steroids are the main reason why long-standing records have shattered like fungo bats. The union has always known about the situation but is loath to do anything about it. Hence Players Union general counsel Gene Orza on steroids: "I have no doubt that they are not worse than cigarettes." As for baseball management, it was shocked—*shocked!*—to discover that athletes were taking designer drugs to make them brawnier and quicker. Hence baseball commish Bud Selig's advocacy of a Five-Strikes-and-Yer-Out rule: four unannounced drug tests per year, a

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15-game suspension upon the first positive test, increasing to one year on the fourth; expulsion would not occur until a fifth positive turned up.

This softball policy must have been too much for President Bush, who lamented steroid abuse in his 2004 State of the Union speech. To bring back baseball's integrity, warned Senator John McCain after the Balco revelations, Selig and the players' union must announce a new policy posthaste. "I'll give them until January, and then I'll introduce legislation."

It may be too late to restore integrity. Baseball now needs *two* record books. One would cover the pre-steroid era, featuring such stars as Babe Ruth, who ate too many hot dogs; Mickey Mantle, who drank too much; and all the other pre-chemical players—some louts like Ty Cobb, some gentlemen like Hank Aaron—who set records without the benefit of Balco. The other, beginning in the early 1990s, when labs got into the business of athletics, would be for players like McGwire (who admitted using a body-building drug in his 70-home-run season), Giambi, and Bonds.

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Soundings

The late Pittsburgh Pirates outfielder Willie Stargell once observed, "The umpires always say 'Play ball.' They don't say 'Work ball.' " They don't say "Sleazeball," either. It seems time they did. —*Stefan Kanfer*

Fulfilling Israel's Promise

The nation needs free-market reforms.

Americans have had over 200 years' experience with the wealth-creating benefits of the free-market economy. Israel, by contrast, a country born just 55 years ago, has economic roots in a "Bolshevik" past, as the head of the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange puts it. As a result, Israel suffers from tax rates 50 percent higher than ours, a concentration of economic power in a few protected industries, lavish welfare spending that eats up much of the national budget, and a fierce resistance to reform.

Israel should have a thriving economy. Despite being on a permanent war footing, the nation has attracted some $100 billion in foreign investment, notes Daniel Doron of the Israel Center for Social and Economic Progress, a free-market think tank. Israel boasts a highly educated workforce, sophisticated research institutions, and a strong tradition of technological innovation. But thanks to statist economic policies, Israel's unemployment and poverty rates are about double the U.S.'s, and its per-capita income is 45 percent lower. Its growth rate lags those of countries with lower levels of education and foreign investment.

The problem is Israel's swollen public sector. Accounting for 55 percent of the nation's economy, it requires job-killing tax rates—60 percent, until Likud finance minister (and former prime minister) Benjamin Netanyahu cut them recently to a still-excessive 49 percent. Netanyahu is now trying to attract more capital by cutting taxes on businesses, especially foreign firms. To succeed, he'll need to rein in government spending, and that is no easy task. Labor Party head Shimon Peres has already denounced Netanyahu's reforms as "swinish capitalism," giving a sense of the level of the debate. And now that Labor is joining the government coalition, it will be even harder to achieve reforms.

Invited to speak on American welfare reform at the Israeli Institute for Policy and Strategy's annual Herzliya Conference, I got a vivid sense of the stakes. In a session on government's responsibility to the poor, speakers—among them, a local mayor and heads of various charities—concluded that Israel must not abandon its commitment to its vast welfare apparatus. Yet through the entire session—it also featured impassioned impromptu speeches from the audience by Knesset members and by advocates of various government-funded programs—no one seemed willing to acknowledge that much of the country's social spending went to pensioners already boasting a higher than average standard of living and to favored groups not required to work, such as members of ultra-orthodox religious groups. Nor did one hear a single mention of how the government could keep paying for such generosity.

The largesse has fostered a culture of dependence. Finance ministry deputy director Yael Andorn showed the conference two graphs that charted what happened after Israel loosened its social welfare policy in the early 1980s and began handing out jobless benefits worth more, in many cases, than the average Israeli worker's salary. Predictably, in the last 20 years, the number of Israelis on welfare has exploded, from 25,000 to about 150,000, while the country's labor-force-participation rate has slumped to just above 50 percent, far lower than the 66 percent U.S. rate.

Netanyahu then argued adamantly that Israel must break this cycle of dependency. Welfare reform had successfully moved millions of the poor in the United States into the workforce, he pointed out, and he hoped that the Israeli economy could someday become a vehicle for promoting economic mobility. But even as he seeks to restrain the budget further in order to cut taxes more deeply, Netanyahu complained, "The Labor Party is demanding bigger old-age pensions for the middle class. We're being asked to give millions of shekels to pensioners in better situations than the average Israeli." Talking with Netanyahu later, I found him keenly interested in economic mobility in the United States and in programs to help welfare recipients make the transition to work, like our earned-income tax credit.

The long-term economic woes have begun to

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have a demoralizing effect on the country as a whole. Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, president of the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, blamed the poor economy for the decision of some 100,000 Eastern European Jews—many highly educated—to immigrate to Germany rather than settle in Israel. Netanyahu, an Israeli security hawk, sees the link between economic prosperity and the long-term defense of Israel. His big task now is to make the citizens of a country nurtured on 1930s-style socialism see it, too.

—*Steven Malanga*

Lies, Damned Lies, and Statistics

A criminologist spins numbers—and ignores the reality of crime.

Statistics can be deceptive. Consider a recent lecture by a senior academic at the prestigious Cambridge Institute of Criminology. She stated that Britain had the highest number of prisoners per 100,000 people of any Western European country, save Spain, where a similar number of people languished behind bars. One conclusion of her talk was that Britain had far too many prisoners. No one in the audience challenged the point.

The conclusion was nevertheless odd, since it suggested the existence of an ideal number of prisoners per 100,000 of the population—an ideal that all countries should strive to approximate, however many the crimes committed or criminal convictions obtained within their jurisdictions. On this view, it was even logical to conceive of a crime-free country failing to imprison enough people.

Of course, the lecturer did not have such a possibility in mind. She ignored the fact that Spain, with an imprisonment rate similar to Britain's, had a crime rate approximately one-quarter of Britain's, and that therefore its courts were four times as likely as Britain's to imprison malefactors: in other words, that Britain's relatively high imprisonment rate was not a sign of the harshness of our courts but of the criminality of our population. In fact, Britain does not have a high imprisonment rate, measured against the number of crimes committed.

The Cambridge lecturer was a typical criminologist: an advocate for the claims of the criminal against those of victims of crime (a much larger class, because each criminal commits on average many crimes, against different people). Her contempt for the general population was obvious in her repetition of the criminologists' old saw that the fear of crime is never proportional to one's statistical chances of becoming a victim of it. Yet it is unreasonable to expect a person to

regulate his level of fear by the latest crime statistics: to feel, say, 10 percent more anxious or 10 percent less anxious because crime has gone up or down by 10 percent.

Is my mother, a rather frail lady of 83, irrationally afraid of crime? She has had her purse filched in broad daylight, in crowded shopping centers, twice in the last four years. If she were not to obey the informal curfew after dark imposed upon the elderly by the criminal young—in other words, if she walked out, on her own, at night—most would take it as a sign of senility, not robust common sense. If she were mugged on one of her nocturnal expeditions—a not unlikely occurrence—the police, contradicting the Cambridge criminologist, probably would tell her henceforth to stay indoors after dark, because they could not guarantee her protection.

It sometimes seems as if the principal qualification for expertise in social affairs is disdainful disregard of the most elementary common sense.

—*Theodore Dalrymple*

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New York Revitalizes U.S. Policing

The Gotham crime-fighting revolution spreads.

Everybody knows about the NYPD's breathtaking crime-fighting successes over the last decade. Less well known is that NYPD-trained police chiefs are taking over police departments across the country, bringing with them the methods that worked so well in Gotham—above all, data-driven policing—and getting similar results.

This NYPD diaspora has reached at least a dozen U.S. cities. They range in size from giant Los Angeles, where former NYPD commissioner William Bratton has cut violent crime by 18 percent since becoming police chief two years ago (despite staffing levels proportionately far below those of other big-city forces) to smaller Sarasota, Florida, where former Queens precinct commander Peter Abbott has slashed crime by double digits over the same period. But hands-on, New York–bred police leadership has made the biggest difference to date in Miami and Providence.

Miami police chief John Timoney started his career in the rough-and-tumble South Bronx during the early seventies. Later, as chief of departments and first deputy commissioner under Bratton, Timoney played a key role in the force's transformation. He went on to become Philadelphia's top cop from 1998 to 2002, when the city's homicide rate fell by one-third.

In January 2003, Mayor Manny Diaz named Timoney chief of the Miami Police, a force with a rep as a haven for trigger-happy cops. On the day of Timoney's swearing-in, a federal criminal trial began against 13 Miami cops on charges resulting from questionable shootings. Timoney swiftly revamped firearms training, tightened use-of-force rules, and equipped many officers with non-lethal weapons such as stun guns.

Result: the department recently went 20 months without any officer's shooting a single bullet, a statistic no other major urban police force can match. (The streak ended in September during an armed robbery, but a new one has been building since.) What made the record truly impressive, though, was that a 30 percent increase in arrests and an 8 percent drop in crime accompanied it. The *Miami Herald*, once one of the Miami police's sharpest critics, has glowingly praised the department's turnaround, emphasizing its positive effects on police-community relations.

In January 2003, another NYPD-associated crime fighter, Dean Esserman, took the helm of another troubled force, this one in Providence, Rhode Island. A former Brooklyn assistant district attorney, Esserman served as general counsel to the New York Transit Police and later advised then–NYPD boss Bratton on corruption, before becoming chief of police in Stamford, Connecticut. None of these jobs, though, posed problems comparable with those he would face in Providence.

For years, notoriously corrupt mayor "Buddy" Cianci ran the city. The police even went by the nickname "Buddy's Boys." The feds' Operation Plunder Dome sent Cianci up the river. During the trial, his former police chief, Urbano Prignano, testified in court to widespread official misconduct, some involving Buddy's Boys. Racial tensions also simmered in the city, coming to the boil in January 2000 after two white officers shot and killed a black off-duty cop. Crime climbed between the late 1990s and 2002.

Esserman quickly introduced New York–style police tactics, including an aggressive task force (working with federal prosecutors) that removed weapons from the streets in record numbers and, even more important, a Compstat (computerized statistics) management-accountability system that has focused the whole department's attention on crime reduction and held commanders responsible for achieving it. Serious crime has fallen dramatically—13 percent in 2003 and 12 percent in 2004—and police morale has soared. Esserman has replaced most of the Cianci-era commanders with his own trusted people. And he's improved relations with minorities, in part by opening new police substations in minority neighborhoods.

Before the 1990s, the belief held in both policing and political circles that crime resulted from factors beyond anyone's control, and that police could do little to influence crime rates. Gotham's crime turnaround—which continues under current commissioner Ray Kelly—shattered that myth. The New York–bred police chiefs at work in other U.S. cities continue to prove that, properly led, cops can cut crime. —*Charles Sahm*

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Health-Care Ills

Instead of fixing New York's bloated health-care system, Governor Pataki has made it worse.

Shortly after taking office in 1995, Governor George Pataki commissioned a study on how to reform New York's crushingly expensive health-care system, characterized by huge public subsidies to hospitals, hefty surcharges on private insurance (making it increasingly hard to afford), and the most spendthrift Medicaid program in the country (a serious burden on local governments, which must shoulder half of the non-federal Medicaid cost in the state). The study called for getting rid of excess hospital beds and cutting health-care subsidies, among other steps.

Recently, a second study on health-care reform commissioned by Pataki reached pretty much the same conclusions. It deserves credit for outlining the tough choices the state must make. But the only real news here is that over the past decade, the governor and the state's legislative leaders have done zero to fix the system's problems and have actually made them worse.

Ten years ago, even hospital and health-care union brass, who had spent the previous two decades using their political might to fatten the system, admitted that change was inevitable. But they pleaded with Pataki to go slow. The hospitals had become so dependent on state subsidies, they said, that weaning them too fast could be ruinous. Pataki replied in 1996 with what was to be Phase One of an ambitious long-term reform, ending the state's practice of setting the price of every hospital procedure but leaving in place the subsidies and the insurance surcharges.

The governor then learned just how formidable the state's health-care industry could be. Rather than preparing for future reforms, the state's hospitals and unionized health-care workforce mounted a political campaign to derail them. In 1999, they rolled out the costliest state lobbying effort ever for a single issue. It included a series of ominous ads warning that reforms would close hospitals and keep New Yorkers from getting needed health care.

Spooked, Pataki reversed course. Instead of pushing new reforms, he raided the state's share of the national tobacco settlement to pour billions more into the wasteful system. Making matters worse, two years later, he used the state's take from Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield's conversion into a for-profit insurer to pay for private-sector health-care worker salaries. Pataki's moves gobbled up money that could have helped eliminate taxes on private insurance and relieve the state's counties and New York City from their Medicaid load, which has contributed to local budget deficits and tax hikes.

Albany's leaders now face another looming crisis. The state's current health-care legislation expires this year. With many other big-ticket,

non-health-care items already busting the budget, Albany will have to come up with new funds to feed the health-care giant. The state will need $2.7 billion just to replace the one-time revenue boost it got from Blue Cross's public offering. And it will need to keep tapping tobacco-settlement funds to sustain hospital subsidies at a time when the state could dearly use that money in other ways.

Pataki might have avoided the coming crisis if he'd made the tough choices in the past. Now, Albany watchers think that the new health-care report is political window dressing—that Pataki will just send the report to the legislature and, when lawmakers fail to enact its proposals, blame them for the state's ongoing health-care woes.

If New York is ever to bring sanity to its health-care system, it will have to wait for another governor. *—Steven Malanga*

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On Campus, Conservatives Talk Back

The liberal stranglehold on academe is starting to slip.

Brian C. Anderson

Throughout 2003 and into 2004, a surge of protests roiled American campuses. You probably think the kids were agitating against war in Iraq, right? Well, no: students at UCLA, Michigan, and many other schools were sponsoring bake sales to protest . . . affirmative action. For white students and faculty, a cookie cost (depending on the school) $1; blacks and Hispanics could buy one for a lot less. The principle, the protesters observed, was just that governing university admission practices: rewarding people differently based on race. Indignant school officials charged the bake-sale organizers with "creating a hostile climate" for minority students, oblivious to the incoherence of their position. On what grounds could they favor race preferences in one area (admissions) and condemn them in the other (selling cookies) as racist? Several schools banned the sales, on flimsy pretexts, such as the organizers' lack of school food permits.

The protests shocked the mainstream press, but to close observers of America's college scene lately they came as no surprise. For decades, conservative critics have bemoaned academe's monolithically liberal culture. Parents, critics note, spend fortunes to send their kids to top colleges, and then watch helplessly as the schools cram them with a diet of politically correct leftism often wholly opposed to Mom and Dad's own values.

But the Left's long dominion over the university—the last place on earth that lefty power would break up, conservatives believed—is showing its first signs of weakening. The change isn't coming from the schools' faculty lounges and administrative offices, of course. It's coming from self-organizing right-of-center students and several innovative outside groups working to bypass the academy's elite gatekeepers.

There have always been conservative students on campus: more than a half-century has passed since a just-matriculated William F. Buckley published *God and Man at Yale*, lamenting his alma mater's secularism and launching the author on his now-legendary career. But never has the Right flourished among college kids as it does today.

The number of College Republicans, for instance, has almost tripled, from 400 or so campus chapters six years ago, to 1,148 today, with 120,000-plus members (compared with the College Democrats' 900 or so chapters and 100,000 members). And College Republicans are thriving even on elite campuses. "We've doubled in size over the last few years, to more than 400 students," reports Evan Baehr, the square-jawed future pol heading the Princeton chapter. The number of College Republicans at Penn has also rocketed upward, says chapter president Stephanie Steward, from 25 or so members a couple of years ago to 700 members today. Same story at Harvard. These young Republican activists, trudging into battleground states this fall in get-out-the vote efforts, helped George W. Bush win.

Other conservative organizations, ranging from gun clubs (Harvard's has more than 100 students blasting away) to impudent newspapers and magazines, are budding at schools everywhere—even at Berkeley, crucible of the sixties' student Left. And right-of-center speakers invited by these clubs are drawing large and approving crowds. "At many schools, those speeches have become the biggest events of the semester," *Time* reports. One such talk at Duke by conservative

CHAD HUNT (3)

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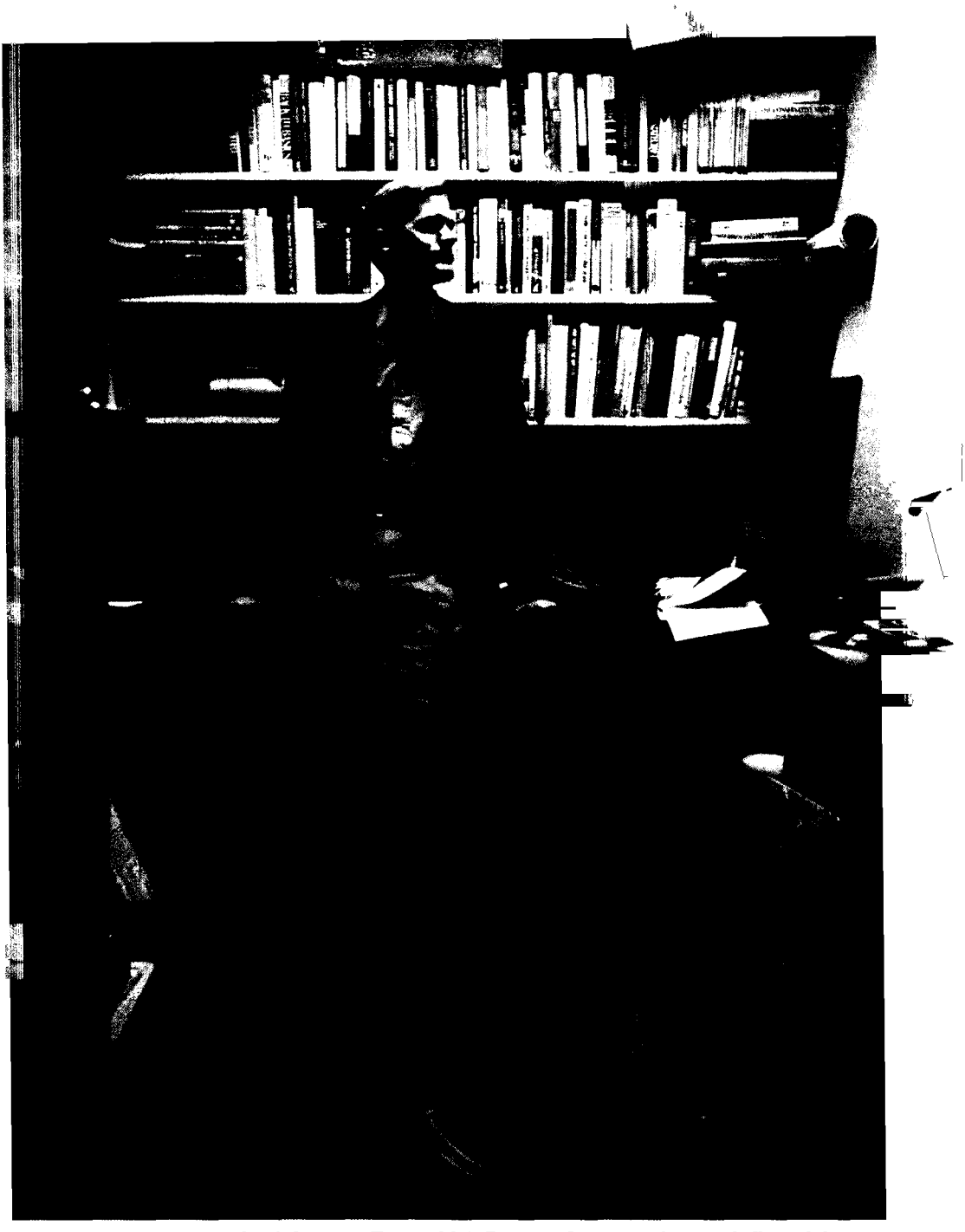

·ative publications, like the *Princeton Tory*, which Duncan Sahner edits, are influential.

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.. Today, only 50 percent do. Some
17 percent of students now value taking part in environmental programs, half of 1992's percentage. Support for abortion stood at two-thirds of students in the early nineties; now it's just over half. A late-2003 Harvard Institute of Politics study found that college students had moved to the right of the overall population, with 31 percent identifying themselves as Republicans, 27 percent as Democrats, and the rest independent

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or unaffiliated. "College campuses aren't a hotbed of liberalism any more," institute director Dan Glickman comments. "It's a different world."

Youthful attitudes are volatile, of course, but this rightward trend may intensify. In a mock election run by Channel One, which broadcasts in public schools, 1.4 million high school students reelected George W. Bush in a landslide, with 55 percent of the popular vote and 393 electoral votes—greater than the 51 percent of the popular vote and 286 electoral votes that he actually won.

Today's right-leaning kids sure don't look much like the Bill Buckley–style young Republicans of yesteryear. "Conservative students today will be wearing the same T-shirts, sneakers, and jeans that you find on most 19-year-old college kids," says Sarah Longwell of the Delaware-based Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ISI), which promotes the Western intellectual tradition on campuses. Jordana Starr, a right-of-center political science and philosophy major at Tufts, tartly adds that you can spot a student leftist pretty fast: "They're the ones who appear not to have seen a shower in some time, nor a laundromat."

The new-millennium campus conservative is comfortably at home in popular culture, as I've found interviewing 50 or so from across the country. A favorite TV show, for instance, is Comedy Central's breathtakingly vulgar cartoon *South Park*. "Not only is it hilariously uncouth, but it also criticizes the hypocrisy of liberals," explains Washington University economics major Matt Arnold. "The funniest part is that most liberals watch the show but are so stupid that they're unaware they're being made fun of," he says, uncharitably. The young conservatives, again like typical college kids, also play their iPods night and day, listening less to Bach and Beethoven than to alt-rock, country-and-western, and hip-hop.

Yet the opinions of these kids are about as far from the *New York Times* as one gets. Affirmative action particularly exasperates them. Chris Pizzo, a political science major who edits Boston College's conservative paper, the *Observer*, points to wealthy Cuban-American friends from his native Florida, "raised with at least the same advantages and in the same environment that I was," yet far likelier to get into the top schools. Where's the justice in that? Pizzo asks. Worse still, many students argue, preferences carry the racist implication that blacks and Hispanics can't compete on pure merit—an implication that holds minorities back. "Affirmative action has a detrimental effect on the black community, whether or not we're willing to admit it," says Jana Hardy, a biracial recent Claremont McKenna grad now working in urban planning.

The war on terror, including in Iraq, drew strong support from most of the students. Typical was Cornell classics major Sharon Ruth Stewart, mildly libertarian—except when it comes to fighting terror. "We have to use any and all means to defend ourselves from the terrorists, who hate the American way of life even more than the French and Germans do," she says. "That means bunker-busters, covert ops—whatever ensures America is safe." University of Maryland junior Nathan Kennedy is just as tough-minded. "I am full-fledged on board with the Iraq war," he says. "We've brought the fight to the terrorists' door, dealing with the radical fundamentalist Arabs who want us all dead."

On cultural issues, the students had clearly reached their own, sometimes idiosyncratic, conclusions. Yale senior Nikki McArthur (a big Metallica fan) is, like most of the students I questioned, ardently pro-life—"but not because I necessarily think that an embryo is a full human being." Rather, she argues, "I think that a culture in which abortion is widely accepted is one in which people have a wrong understanding of children and sex. Children should not be considered burdens." Jordan Rodriguez, a rugged-looking evangelical Princeton undergrad, Deke pledge president, and hyperachiever—he was varsity baseball and editor of the literary magazine at his San Antonio high school and a violist in the city's Youth Philharmonic—is as hard-line as they come on abortion. The practice is "ethically abominable," he says; it should be regarded as "a form of homicide and prosecuted as such."

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Many of the students, especially the women, value getting married and raising a family with a fervor that would thrill the Family Research Council. "I'm an old-fashioned girl," avers Cornell's Stewart. "I think it's wonderful when a mother can spend the majority of her time devoted to her child's early years. I plan to do just that." Reports University of Virginia sociology professor W. Bradford Wilcox: "My biggest surprise in teaching here is that I am coming across growing numbers of postfeminist college women. They tend to be very bright and—other things being equal—would normally gravitate to feminist academics." Instead, Wilcox notes, they're looking for "a sane path forward for the revival of courtship and family life." Polling data suggest that such sentiments are increasingly widespread. A 2001 survey, for instance, found that 88 percent of male high school seniors and 93 percent of females thought it extremely or quite important to have a good marriage and family life (see "It's Morning After in America," Spring 2004).

Yet for most of the conservative students I interviewed, traditional values did not extend to homosexuality. Though few support gay marriage, fewer still want the Constitution amended to ban it, and most are okay with state-sanctioned civil unions for gays. "I don't buy the prevalent argument that recognizing gay unions would undermine the institution of marriage," says Vanderbilt sophomore Anne Malinee, the strongly pro-life editor of the *Vanderbilt Torch*, the school's conservative monthly. "Of all the issues elected officials could be focusing on, why this?" Similarly, Bucknell history and economics major Charles Mitchell, culturally conservative in many respects, isn't worried about gay marriage. "I believe that homosexuality is a sin, because that's what the Bible says, but I also believe that if two people of the same sex love each other and can get a priest to marry them, the propriety of that is none of the state's business."

"After 9/11, many collegians came to distrust the UN-loving Left to defend the nation with vigor."

What accounts for the growing conservatism of college students? After 9/11, many collegians came to distrust the UN-loving Left to defend the nation with vigor. As of late 2003, college students backed the war more strongly than the overall American population. Notes Edward Morrissey, "Captain Ed" of the popular conservative blog *Captain's Quarters*, these kids "grew up on . . . moral relativism and internationalism, constantly fed the line that there was no such thing as evil in the world, only misunderstandings." Suddenly, on 9/11, this generation discovered that "there are enemies and they wanted to kill Americans in large numbers, and that a good portion of what they'd been taught was drizzly pap."

Yet a deeper reason for the rightward shift, which began well before 9/11, is the Left's broader intellectual and political failure. American college kids grew up in an era that witnessed both communism's fall and the unchained U.S. economy's breathtaking productivity surge. They've seen that anyone willing to work hard—regardless of race or sex—can thrive in such an opportunity-rich system. "I'm only 20, so I don't remember segregation or the oppression of women—in fact, my mother had a very successful career since I was a kid," one student observed in an online discussion. "I look around and don't see any discrimination against minorities or women." Left-wing charges of U.S. economic injustice sound like so much BS to many kids today.

The destructive effects of "just-do-it" values on the family are equally evident to many undergrads, who have painfully felt those effects themselves or watched them rip up the homes of their friends. They turn to family values with the enthusiasm of converts. Even their support of homosexual civil unions may spring from their rejection of the world of casual hookups, broken marriages, and wounded children that liberalism has produced. "Heterosexuals have already done a

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decent job of cheapening marriage on their own," observes Vanderbilt's Malinee.

Conservative ideas take on even greater allure for students when the authorities say they're *verboten*. From pervasive campus political correctness—the unfree speech codes, obligatory diversity-sensitivity seminars, and school-sponsored performances of *The Vagina Monologues*—to the professorate's near-uniform leftism, with faculty Democrats outnumbering Republicans by at least seven to one (at Williams, it's 51 Dems to zero Republicans), everything aims to implant correct left-wing attitudes in student brains. "There's a natural and healthy tendency among students to question the piety of their teachers," Penn history professor Alan Kors noted a few months back. "And for so long the pieties, dogmas, and set of assumptions being taught on college campuses have been found on the far left." Says Daniel Flynn of the Leadership Institute, a nonprofit that trains young conservative activists: "The intention of many in academe is to evangelize left-wing ideas, but in effect what they're doing is often the opposite: piquing interest in the other side."

Katherine Ernst, a perky, blond, and diminutive recent NYU grad, confirms the point. Like many students I queried, Ernst already leaned right when she arrived on campus. But the left-wing propagandizing of her professors made her conservatism rock-solid. "One professor, right after September 11, gave a terrorist-sympathy speech that went, you know: 'Oil, oil, oil, they're poor, we take advantage of them, it's really complicated, blah, blah, blah.' It was something that I and many other students living in our financial-district dorm really enjoyed," Ernst says acidly. "The worst professor I ever had, though, was for a course in administrative law," she recalls. "Every class—no exaggeration—included at least five references to 'Bush was selected.' " A final straw for Ernst came when a professor—"a for-real communist"—walked out of a class he was teaching "to take part in some stupid protest march." So there you have it, says Ernst: "You pay thousands and thousands and the prof takes off to carry a NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE sign around Union Square Park. How could anybody exposed to this kind of stuff *not* become a raging right-winger?"

Chapel Hill journalism major Debra McCown would agree. At her school, she complains, the liberal profs tend to "ram their political views down students' throats." One incident particularly outraged her. "I watched as a classmate, required to attend class in his military uniform, sat there silently as the professor ranted about how every member of the U.S. military is a 'baby-killer' who enjoys violence—because what could he possibly say to a teacher who pronounced such things, with him sitting there in uniform?" Bucknell grad Tom Elliot (profiled in a 2003 *New York Times Magazine* article on young conservatives) experienced "quite a bit" of hostility in the classroom. "I was constantly singled out and made to look ridiculous—responsible for the right-wing ideas being lambasted by the professor that day," he observes. Tufts' Jordana Starr listens to her media and politics professor berate conservatives week after week: Bush's re-election is the "apocalypse," Bush is an evil draft dodger, ad nauseam.

The leftism that so angers these students includes the hey-ho-Western-civ-has-got-to-go theories that inform college courses from coast to coast. "In too many classrooms," says former Reagan education secretary William Bennett, "radical professors teach their students that Western thought is suspect, that Enlightenment ideals are inherently oppressive, and that the basic principles of the American founding are not 'relevant' to our time."

College course catalogs often read like satires. Want to study English lit at, say, Penn? Freshmen take introductory classes like "Secrecy and Sexuality in the Modern Novel," taught by—no joke—Heather Love. In the course description, Dr. Love explains that "many of the books that we consider 'great literature' "—the obligatory postmodern scare quotes signaling the supposed absurdity of the idea of aesthetic quality—"are noted as much for what they don't say as for what they do." Deconstructing Herman Melville and other dead white males, Dr. Love promises to uncover "what,

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Princetonian Evan Baehr heads one of the fast-multiplying chapters of College Republicans.

if anything, they are hiding" about homosexuality, pederasty, and incest. That's for first-year students. Dr. Love's upper-level course "Theories of Gender and Sexuality" focuses on "reproductive rights; pornography, 'sex work' [prostitution in human-speak], and free speech; . . . and transgender activism," among other themes that seem to have zilch to do with English lit. Other English majors get to explore "postcolonial literature" with Professor Cynthia Port, who relies on radical authors Edward Said and Frantz Fanon to "revise imperial narratives, challenge assumptions about identity and otherness, and scrutinize the politics of language."

Want to learn history at Brown? "Europe from Rome to the Eighteenth Century," taught by

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Professor Amy Remensnyder, will chart "the complex divisions" of various groups within European societies "according to gender, class, and ethnicity," the holy trinity of postmodern intellectuals. "In the end," says William Bennett, "the central problem is not that the majority of students are being indoctrinated (although some are) but that they graduate knowing almost nothing at all. Or worse still, they graduate thinking that they know everything."

A student, conservative or otherwise, who doesn't buy into the West-is-the-worst line can "have an awful time of it," says Harvard junior Jordan Hylden. "It is quite difficult in fields like literature, anthropology, the social sciences, and even religion to even be informed," he complains. "It's like an ivory echo chamber, where only the 'right'—subversive, anti-Western—ideas get a hearing." Small wonder that enrollments in such fields have plummeted. The percentage of undergrad degrees in the humanities, nearly 21 percent in the mid-sixties, fell to 12 percent or so by the nineties and has never climbed back up.

Some conservative students stuck in a left-wing echo chamber keep their real views to themselves and parrot the "correct" line, fearing that otherwise they'll get a low grade. One earnest Princeton freshman, for instance, had to write a paper on same-sex marriage, which he opposes, for a constitutional-law course taught by a pro-gay-marriage professor. "I radically altered my position to make it more in line with what my professor's beliefs are on this topic and many others—and I know what those beliefs are, because she insists on starting each class with a diatribe covering any number of current political issues, in addition to mocking Supreme Court Justices Scalia and Thomas consistently," he says. A 2003 survey by the Independent Women's Forum found that anywhere from one-quarter to one-third of students had felt forced to check "their intellectual and philosophical honesty at the door in order to get good grades." A brand-new American Council of Trustees and Alumni survey finds that half of all students—not just conservatives—at the top 50 colleges say that profs frequently inject their political views into courses, and almost one-third think that they have to agree with those views to get a good grade.

Such self-censorship may become rarer, thanks in large part to several national organizations whose efforts to bring diversity of thought to academe are starting to pay off. These groups help create right-of-center student clubs, and they sponsor conservative talks—giving students the self-assurance to express conservative views publicly and fostering campus dialogue. "There is no coercion or imposition going on," Bucknell's Mitchell editorialized in the *Washington Times*. Rather, a demand for conservative ideas "is simply being met by, you might say, intellectual entrepreneurs."

Perhaps most significant is Students for Academic Freedom (SAF), founded in 2003 and already boasting 130 campus chapters. Its key initiative is a campaign for an "Academic Bill of Rights," which enjoins universities not to deny tenure or fail to hire teachers solely because of their "retrograde" conservative politics, and to ensure that teachers keep their classes from becoming left-wing propaganda sessions. "What I've set out to do is to try to restore the educational principles that were in place before the generation of sixties leftists infiltrated the university and corrupted it by transforming it into an ideological platform," explains founder David Horowitz. Legislation enacting variations of the bill is on the move in 19 states. In Colorado, state colleges adopted a version of the bill "voluntarily," to prevent the legislature from imposing even tougher rules.

In lobbying for the bill of rights, SAF publicizes horror stories that its chapters gather: a Spanish instructor telling his class, "I wish George Bush were dead"; a public policy prof telling a student headed for a conservative conference in Washington, "Well, then, you'll probably fail my course"; a law professor proclaiming, "We all know that the 'r' in Republican stands for racist"; and a criminology teacher who asked students on a test to explain why George Bush is a war criminal, and then gave an F to a student who answered that Saddam Hussein, not W, was the monster. Horowitz says that conservative kids have usually just accepted such classroom demagoguery. "They're conservative, and their disposition is to suffer: 'That's just the way colleges are,'" Horowitz says. "What I've done as an

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ex-radical is to encourage them to see the injustices done to them as injustices—and do something about it."

Needless to say, the university establishment is downright angry about SAF's campaign—all the more so because it turns the Left's own language of "diversity" and "rights" against it. The liberal American Association of University Professors, in textbook Orwellian fashion, declares the Academic Bill of Rights a "grave threat" to academic freedom. In Colorado, Horowitz recounts, "A student whose professor at a state school threw him out of class, saying, 'I don't want your right-wing views in my classroom,' testified at a legislative hearing that the bill would be a good idea, since it would curtail that kind of behavior. Once the student gets away from the microphone, the chairman of the philosophy department from the state university in question comes up, jams the kid in the chest with his finger, and says, 'I have a Ph.D. from Harvard, and I will sue your *fucking* ass if this bill passes.'" A legislator, overhearing the threat from this anti-Socrates, noted: "That's exactly why we need this bill of rights."

"Half of all students at the top 50 colleges say that profs frequently inject their political views into courses."

The idea of intellectual diversity seems to be catching on even where the Academic Bill of Rights hasn't yet appeared. Consider Columbia University, currently embroiled in controversy because—as the *New York Sun* has reported—pro-Arab professors have promoted a venomously anti-Israel classroom agenda, jeering at students who disagree. In response, the liberal *Columbia Daily Spectator*, the school's major undergraduate paper, called for greater political balance on the faculty. "By not having a conservative voice hawk its wares in the hue and cry of the academic marketplace, Columbia is failing its students," the paper argued. "It should be self-evident that a faculty that speaks with unanimity on some of the most divisive issues of the day is not fulfilling its duty."

SAF helps college kids resist classroom demagoguery, but where can a student go for teaching that doesn't ignore or denounce conservative ideas or traditional learning but instead explores them sympathetically? Some students look to the new conservative media—talk radio, Fox News, the blogosphere. "Excluding one great economics professor, I learned more from listening to Rush Limbaugh every day than from all the NYU professors I've had," says Katherine Ernst, not really joking. Several students told me that they read *National Review Online* and *FrontPage* daily as reality checks on their classes.

But if a student is really lucky, he'll find a prof like Princeton political scientist (and *City Journal* contributor) Robert George, a rare conservative who not only survives but also thrives in academe. George has sparked passionate intellectual interest among students. "Professor George's stamp on our intellectual formation is unmistakable," confided one. Students particularly admire George's approach to intellectual debate. "For our papers," says Duncan Sahner, the intensely serious editor of the *Princeton Tory*, the campus's conservative magazine, "he stresses the need to engage in what he calls the 'strongest possible lines of counterargument.' Straw-man parries, he says, only hurt conservatism." Moreover, Sahner adds, "His interactions with those who disagree with him are great examples of professional courtesy."

George has also helped students expand their intellectual horizons through his fast-growing, four-year-old James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions, a model of liberal education in the old-fashioned sense. It runs high-level lectures by such conservative thinkers as Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia and Harvard political theorist Harvey Mansfield, as well as such notable liberal scholars as Arthur Schlesinger Jr. and Michael Sandel. The program also enables George to appoint half a dozen visiting Madison Fellows, whose ranks have

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included such conservative lights as political scientists Angelo Codevilla and Hadley Arkes.

"All of a sudden," says one Princeton faculty member, "you've got a critical mass of conservative adults on campus, and conservative views become live options for students." And Princeton's right-leaning students have formed a little platoon around the Madison Program—as I discovered when, on short notice on a crisp November day, George gathered 25 or so of them to speak with me in front of a roaring fireplace.

Since few schools—and even fewer elite schools—boast such profs and programs, other national groups have rushed in to supply some of what's missing. The Virginia-based Young America's Foundation (YAF), for example, sponsors more than 200 university lectures a year by leading conservatives such as Horowitz, *Weekly Standard* editor Fred Barnes, and anti-feminist critic Christina Hoff Sommers. Every year, thousands of students attend YAF's conferences on the principles of a free society, some held at the Reagan Ranch in Santa Barbara, which the group bought in 1998.

The Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ISI), founded in 1953 but reinvigorated in recent years, is perhaps the biggest force fighting the Left's campus domination. It sponsors hundreds of conservative campus lectures a year, rooted in "the enduring Western intellectual patrimony" of political and economic liberty, limited government, the rule of law, moral truth, and personal responsibility. ISI's talks are usually more highbrow than YAF's: regular speakers include classicist (and *City Journal* contributing editor) Victor Davis Hanson and historian Forrest McDonald. Another key initiative from ISI: a series of short student guides, written by first-rate scholars such as John Lukacs (on history) and Gerald Bradley (on constitutional law), that show undergraduates how to educate themselves in the traditional academic disciplines. Hundreds of thousands are now in print. In addition, ISI provides a guide to colleges that, among other features, warns college applicants about the schools that are particularly PC and shows them how to find teachers committed to scholarship rather than indoctrination. Says Roger Kimball, whose pioneering *Tenured Radicals* exposed the Left's campus stranglehold 15 years ago: "ISI is an indispensable ally in the fight against spurious claims to 'diversity,' 'tolerance,' and 'enlightenment' in the university, while also providing a beacon that serious students and scholars can follow with genuine profit. As Voltaire said about another supremely important fixture in the universe, if ISI did not exist, it would be necessary to invent it."

One of ISI's biggest boosts to campus conservatism has been to expand the number of right-leaning student publications. For some $1 million a year on printing costs and journalistic training, ISI now boasts 85 or so member publications at schools ranging from elite Columbia and the University of Chicago to small community colleges—a 50 percent jump from just a few years ago. More than 800 kids currently work on the papers.

At their best, these publications mix serious analysis of both national and campus issues with impertinent anti-liberal humor. The *Virginia Advocate* at UVa is a good example. A recent issue featured a thoughtful interview with conservative critic Paul Cantor on popular culture, as well as the latest installment of a satirical column written by "The Stinky Hippy" (a recurring complaint of right-of-center college kids). An autumn issue of the *Stanford Review* mock-reported on "The Penis Dialogues: A journey of self-awakening . . . and penises"—but also editorialized with sharp intelligence about "Musharraf's Deception" in the war on terror.

The campus Left has greeted these publications with outrage. In 2003, at Roger Williams University in Rhode Island, to take one prominent example, the *Hawk's Right Eye*—judged by the College Republican National Committee the second-best conservative student paper in the country—published a spate of anti-PC articles, until university president Roy Nirschel charged that the paper had "crossed seriously over the lines of propriety and respect," "flirted with racist and anti-Islamic rhetoric," and—you guessed it—created a "hostile environment for our students and

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NYU's relentless political correctness hardened recent grad Katherine Ernst's conservative convictions.

community." The school froze $2,700 in campus funds granted to the paper. It was a "death blow" for the *Hawk's Right Eye*, says editor Jason Mattera, silencing it for the year.

Student leftists, sometimes with the support of school officials, regularly try to shut down or shut up conservative student publications, practicing what civil libertarian Nat Hentoff calls "free speech for me and not for thee." A few years ago, for instance, Cornell's dean of students stood side by side with leftist students as they torched copies of the *Cornell Review*, which had run an article mocking Ebonics. An official university spokesman defended the burning as "symbolic." In 2003, *Campus* magazine reports, the liberal-controlled SUNY-Albany student

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association, solely for political reasons, nixed student activity funds for the right-leaning *College Standard Magazine*—this, after the magazine had already faced months of harassment from the campus Left, including disruptions of its meetings by radical groups, thousands of copies stolen, and defacement of its display stands with anti-conservative threats. The magazine's staff, claiming discrimination against their conservative ideas, won a ten-month court battle against the school to have funding restored.

Of course, conservative kids face the same social pressures that all college students do. So how do they fare on the campus social scene? It varies by school. Students I interviewed who attended southern schools said that right-of-center kids were in the majority and set the tone. Harris Martin, a University of Georgia history major who estimates that over 60 percent of students there tilt right, says, "The culture is a distinctly southern conservative one—hunting, football, big trucks and SUVs, camouflage, old baseball caps, fishing, country music, and southern rock." At Clemson in South Carolina, says poli-sci junior Andrew Davis, "the typical student is Republican," though most don't care much about politics.

The more politically correct culture prevailing at other schools, especially the Ivies, can be a problem for conservative students. Several Princeton freshmen, for instance, believed that being seen as a conservative would make it harder for them to get into one of the school's prestigious "bicker" eating clubs—key sources of social standing on a status-conscious campus, and *the* places to party. "I've avoided writing any major articles for the *Tory*, because I'm afraid it could hurt me when it reaches the time for me to bicker," one freshman confessed. Two other students hesitated to talk with me for the same reason, while a third said that she, too, wouldn't write for the *Tory* until she had made it into a selective club.

But for all the anxiety of the Princeton students, conservative kids on most campuses are eager to engage their liberal classmates (at least the ones who aren't burning newspapers) and have sparked a genuinely two-sided conversation that so rarely occurs in the classroom. The University of Washington College Republicans, for example, hold regular debates with Young Democrats and other campus liberal groups. "I like to think that we're talking to young people who may not have formed their views and convincing them that our views are right," UDub chapter head Nick Dayton recently observed. The conversation can continue in the dorms. "My roommate and I used to spend hours watching old episodes of *The West Wing*," says Yalie Nikki McArthur (currently doing an internship in Washington, D.C.). "She is as liberal as I am conservative, and we always had little political debates during the commercial breaks."

Conservative students must also deal with the coed dorms and hookup sex, drink-till-you're-blitzed parties, and general civilizational chaos of life at many schools—vividly described by author Tom Wolfe in his new novel *I Am Charlotte Simmons*—that liberal educators abetted and encouraged when they rejected any *in-loco-parentis* duties decades ago and began to celebrate the idea of college being a time of "experimentation" and "growth." For some libertarian kids on the Right, the social scene is A-OK. "Say what you will about us," enthuses "conservative libertarian" University of Michigan junior Ruben Duran, "we like to party! More than our fair share of sex, alcohol, rock and roll. Not so much drugs, though," he adds helpfully. But for some conservative students, especially those from religious backgrounds, the bedlam can be unsettling.

Harvard's Jordan Hylden, a conservative Protestant, finds Wolfe's characterization of campus life "depressingly correct." As well he might, given the dean-supervised tailgate party for the Harvard-Yale football game this November, so out-of-control with drunkenness, drugs, and nudity that it made headlines in the *Boston Herald*. "Today's university is without morals or guiding principles, except one," Hylden contends: "to follow in all things the ideal of 'to thine own self be true'—individual desires, whatever they are, are affirmed, and the denial of these desires, by

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yourself or by another person or group, is the greatest possible evil."

Some conservative students feel considerable pressure to "grow." Jennifer Mickel, a pretty Princeton sophomore majoring in Near Eastern studies, is a Presbyterian from Monroe, Louisiana, and a moral traditionalist. She'll drink a bit, but random hookups are a big no. And she gets flak for it. "Many of my girlfriends describe their sexual exploits in graphic detail and tell me that I need to get over my 'penis fear,'" she confides. Many Princeton males, she says, expect sex, or at least "intimate preludes to it," to follow a conversation and a dance—and certainly a bite to eat. "I just don't understand how boys and girls alike can throw around intimate acts so lightly," Mickel laments. Things are different back in Monroe, where the rules of courtship still apply (a point made to me about their hometowns by several southern students). Lots of students, she says, do eventually get into serious, almost-married relationships at Princeton, but these often grow out of "repeated hookups." "Perhaps, in a way, it's like a new kind of dating," Mickel reflects wryly.

"Conservative students must deal with the hookup sex and drink-till-you're-blitzed parties at many schools."

"Binge drinking and hookups are pretty pervasive in collegiate culture," says Vanderbilt's Anne Malinee. "Generally, students across the political spectrum, even self-confessed conservatives, participate to some extent." Recent Indiana University grad (and now law student) Joshua Claybourn agrees: "It's not uncommon for me to hear, even among conservatives, something like this: 'I don't have time for a relationship, so of course I hook up,'" he reports. "And I can count on one hand, among the thousands of students I've met, those who refrain from drinking regularly."

Helping students resist such pressures are a growing number of vigorous student religious groups, preaching moderation. College campuses nationwide have seen a "religious upsurge" over the last decade, the *Christian Science Monitor* reports. MIT, for example, is now home to 15 Christian fellowship groups—"a pretty stunning development for a university . . . where efficiency and rationality are embedded in the DNA of the cold granite campus," notes the *Boston Globe*, making the typical liberal assumption that one can't be both an Evangelical Christian and rational. A new UCLA survey found that three-quarters of college juniors say that religious or spiritual beliefs have helped develop their identities, and 77 percent say that they pray.

The upperclassman leaders of these groups can set examples for younger students, as Princeton senior Renee Gardner, leader of Crossroads Christian Fellowship, tries to do with student drinking. "There's certainly pressure on most students involved in the typical social scene to drink to excess," says Gardner, whose conservative values proved no bar to her joining one of the top Princeton bicker clubs. "I've chosen—as have many Christian friends—to abstain from drinking in those contexts, not only to make it simpler for us to avoid blurring the line between acceptable and unacceptable levels of drinking, but also to make others feel more comfortable who might not want to drink."

Conservatives still have a long, long way to go before they can proclaim the Left's control over the campus broken. The professorate remains a solidly left-wing body, more likely to assign Barbara Ehrenreich than Milton Friedman, Michel Foucault than Michael Oakeshott, and nothing, not even David Horowitz's indefatigable activism, is going to change that soon.

Nevertheless, thanks both to enterprising students and groups like ISI and SAF, the Left's iron hold on academe is beginning to loosen. Anyone who cares about the education of our children—and the future political discourse of our country—can only cheer.

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How to Interrogate Terrorists

Don't believe the charges. American troops treat terrorists with Geneva-convention politeness—perhaps too much so.

Heather Mac Donald

It didn't take long for interrogators in the war on terror to realize that their part was not going according to script. Pentagon doctrine, honed over decades of cold-war planning, held that 95 percent of prisoners would break upon straightforward questioning. Interrogators in Afghanistan, and later in Cuba and Iraq, found just the opposite: virtually none of the terror detainees was giving up information—not in response to direct questioning, and not in response to army-approved psychological gambits for prisoners of war.

Debate erupted in detention centers across the globe about how to get detainees to talk. Were "stress techniques"—such as isolation or sleep deprivation to decrease a detainee's resistance to questioning—acceptable? Before the discussion concluded, however, the photos of prisoner abuse in Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison appeared. Though they showed the sadism of a prison out of control, they showed nothing about interrogation.

Nevertheless, Bush-administration critics seized on the scandal as proof that prisoner "torture" had become routine. A master narrative—call it the "torture narrative"—sprang up: the government's 2002 decision to deny Geneva-convention status to al-Qaida fighters, it held, "led directly to the abuse of detainees in Afghanistan and Iraq," to quote the *Washington Post*. In particular, torturous interrogation methods, developed at Guantánamo Bay and Afghanistan in illegal disregard of Geneva protections, migrated to Abu Ghraib and were manifest in the abuse photos.

This story's success depends on the reader's remaining ignorant of the actual interrogation techniques promulgated in the war on terror. Not only were they light years from real torture and hedged around with bureaucratic safeguards, but they had nothing to do with the Abu Ghraib anarchy. Moreover, the decision on the Geneva conventions was irrelevant to interrogation practices in Iraq.

No matter. The Pentagon's reaction to the scandal was swift and sweeping. It stripped interrogators not just of stress options but of traditional techniques long regarded as uncontroversial as well. Red tape now entangles the interrogation process, and detainees know that their adversaries' hands are tied.

The need for rethinking interrogation doctrine in the war on terror will not go away, however. The Islamist enemy is unlike any the military has encountered in the past. If current wisdom on the rules of war prohibits making any distinction between a terrorist and a lawful combatant, then that orthodoxy needs to change.

The interrogation debate first broke out on the frigid plains of Afghanistan. Marines and other special forces would dump planeloads of al-Qaida and Taliban prisoners into a ramshackle detention facility outside the Kandahar airport; waiting interrogators were then supposed to extract information to be fed immediately back into the battlefield—whether a particular mountain pass was booby-trapped, say, or where an arms cache lay. That "tactical" debriefing accomplished, the Kandahar interrogation crew would determine which prisoners were significant enough to be shipped on to the Guantánamo naval base in Cuba for high-level interrogation.

Unlike sleep deprivation or shouting at captives, this is torture.

BROWN BROTHERS

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Army doctrine gives interrogators 16 "approaches" to induce prisoners of war to divulge critical information. Sporting names like "Pride and Ego Down" and "Fear Up Harsh," these approaches aim to exploit a detainee's self-love, allegiance to or resentment of comrades, or sense of futility. Applied in the right combination, they will work on nearly everyone, the intelligence soldiers had learned in their training.

But the Kandahar prisoners were not playing by the army rule book. They divulged nothing. "Prisoners overcame the [traditional] model almost effortlessly," writes Chris Mackey in *The Interrogators*, his gripping account of his interrogation service in Afghanistan. The prisoners confounded their captors "not with clever cover stories but with simple refusal to cooperate. They offered lame stories, pretended not to remember even the most basic of details, and then waited for consequences that never really came."

Some of the al-Qaida fighters had received resistance training, which taught that Americans were strictly limited in how they could question prisoners. Failure to cooperate, the al-Qaida manuals revealed, carried no penalties and certainly no risk of torture—a sign, gloated the manuals, of American weakness.

Even if a prisoner had not previously studied American detention policies before arriving at Kandahar, he soon figured them out. "It became very clear very early on to the detainees that the Americans were just going to have them sit there," recalls interrogator Joe Martin (a pseudonym). "They realized: 'The Americans will give us our Holy Book, they'll draw lines on the floor showing us where to pray, we'll get three meals a day with fresh fruit, do Jazzercise with the guards, . . . we can wait them out.' "

Even more challenging was that these detainees bore little resemblance to traditional prisoners of war. The army's interrogation manual presumed adversaries who were essentially the mirror image of their captors, motivated by emotions that all soldiers share. A senior intelligence official who debriefed prisoners in the 1989 U.S. operation in Panama contrasts the battlefield then and now: "There were no martyrs down there, believe me," he chuckles. "The Panamanian forces were more understandable people for us. Interrogation was pretty straightforward: 'Love of Family' [an army-manual approach, promising, say, contact with wife or children in exchange for cooperation] or, 'Here's how you get out of here as fast as you can.' "

"Love of family" often had little purchase among the terrorists, however—as did love of life. "The jihadists would tell you, 'I've divorced this life, I don't care about my family,' " recalls an interrogator at Guantánamo. "You couldn't shame them." The fierce hatred that the captives bore their captors heightened their resistance. The U.S. ambassador to Pakistan reported in January 2002 that prisoners in Kandahar would "shout epithets at their captors, including threats against the female relatives of the soldiers guarding them, knee marines in the groin, and say that they will escape and kill 'more Americans and Jews.' " Such animosity continued in Guantánamo.

Battlefield commanders in Afghanistan and intelligence officials in Washington kept pressing for information, however. The frustrated interrogators constantly discussed how to get it. The best hope, they agreed, was to re-create the "shock of capture"—that vulnerable mental state when a prisoner is most frightened, most uncertain, and most likely to respond to questioning. Uncertainty is an interrogator's most powerful ally; exploited wisely, it can lead the detainee to believe that the interrogator is in total control and holds the key to his future. The Kandahar detainees, however, learned almost immediately what their future held, no matter how egregious their behavior: nothing untoward.

Many of the interrogators argued for a calibrated use of "stress techniques"—long interrogations that would cut into the detainees' sleep schedules, for example, or making a prisoner kneel or stand, or aggressive questioning that would put a detainee on edge.

Joe Martin—a crack interrogator who discovered that a top al-Qaida leader, whom Pakistan claimed to have in custody, was still at large

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and directing the Afghani resistance—explains the psychological effect of stress: "Let's say a detainee comes into the interrogation booth and he's had resistance training. He knows that I'm completely handcuffed and that I can't do anything to him. If I throw a temper tantrum, lift him onto his knees, and walk out, you can feel his uncertainty level rise dramatically. He's been told: 'They won't physically touch you,' and now you have. The point is not to beat him up but to introduce the reality into his mind that he doesn't know where your limit is." Grabbing someone by the top of the collar has had a more profound effect on the outcome of questioning than any actual torture could have, Martin maintains. "The guy knows: You just broke your own rules, and that's scary. He might demand to talk to my supervisor. I'll respond: 'There are no supervisors here,' and give him a maniacal smile."

The question was: Was such treatment consistent with the Geneva conventions?

President Bush had declared in February 2002 that al-Qaida members fell wholly outside the conventions and that Taliban prisoners would not receive prisoner-of-war status—without which they, too, would not be covered by the Geneva rules. Bush ordered, however, that detainees be treated humanely and in accordance with Geneva principles, to the extent consistent with military necessity. This second pronouncement sank in: all of the war on terror's detention facilities chose to operate under Geneva rules. Contrary to the fulminations of rights advocates and the press, writes Chris Mackey, "Every signal we interrogators got from above from the colonels at [the Combined Forces Land Component Command] in Kuwait to the officers at Central Command back in Tampa—had been . . . to observe the Conventions, respect prisoners' rights, and never cut corners."

What emerged was a hybrid and fluid set of detention practices. As interrogators tried to overcome the prisoners' resistance, their reference point remained Geneva and other humanitarian treaties. But the interrogators pushed into the outer limits of what they thought the law allowed, undoubtedly recognizing that the prisoners in their control violated everything the pacts stood for.

The Geneva conventions embody the idea that even in as brutal an activity as war, civilized nations could obey humanitarian rules: no attacking civilians and no retaliation against enemy soldiers once they fall into your hands. Destruction would be limited as much as possible to professional soldiers on the battlefield. That rule required, unconditionally, that soldiers distinguish themselves from civilians by wearing uniforms and carrying arms openly.

Obedience to Geneva rules rests on another bedrock moral principle: reciprocity. Nations will treat an enemy's soldiers humanely because they want and expect their adversaries to do the same. Terrorists flout every civilized norm animating the conventions. Their whole purpose is to kill noncombatants, to blend into civilian populations, and to conceal their weapons. They pay no heed whatever to the golden rule; anyone who falls into their hands will most certainly not enjoy commissary privileges and wages, per the Geneva mandates. He—or she—may even lose his head.

Even so, terror interrogators tried to follow the spirit of the Geneva code for conventional, uniformed prisoners of war. That meant, as the code puts it, that the detainees could not be tortured or subjected to "any form of coercion" in order to secure information. They were to be "humanely" treated, protected against "unpleasant or disadvantageous treatment of any kind," and were entitled to "respect for their persons and their honour."

The Kandahar interrogators reached the following rule of thumb, reports Mackey: if a type of behavior toward a prisoner was no worse than the way the army treated its own members, it could not be considered torture or a violation of the conventions. Thus, questioning a detainee past his bedtime was lawful as long as his interrogator stayed up with him. If the interrogator was missing exactly the same amount of sleep as the detainee—and no tag-teaming of interrogators would be allowed, the soldiers decided—then sleep deprivation could not be

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deemed torture. In fact, interrogators were routinely sleep-deprived, catnapping maybe one or two hours a night, even as the detainees were getting long beauty sleeps. Likewise, if a boot-camp drill sergeant can make a recruit kneel with his arms stretched out in front without violating the Convention Against Torture, an interrogator can use that tool against a recalcitrant terror suspect.

Did the stress techniques work? Yes. "The harsher methods we used . . . the better information we got and the sooner we got it," writes Mackey, who emphasizes that the methods never contravened the conventions or crossed over into torture.

Stress broke a young bomb maker, for instance. Six months into the war, special forces brought a young Afghan to the Kandahar facility, the likely accomplice of a Taliban explosives expert who had been blowing up aid workers. Joe Martin got the assignment.

"Who's your friend the Americans are looking for?" the interrogation began.

"I don't know."

"You think this is a joke? What do you think I'll do?"

"Torture me."

So now I understand his fear, Martin recollects.

The interrogation continued: "You'll stand here until you tell me your friend."

"No, sir, he's not my friend."

Martin picked up a book and started reading. Several hours later, the young Taliban was losing his balance and was clearly terrified. Moreover, he's got two "big hillbilly guards staring at him who want to kill him," the interrogator recalls.

"You think THIS is bad?!" the questioning starts up again.

"No, sir."

The prisoner starts to fall; the guards stand him back up. If he falls again, and can't get back up, Martin can do nothing further. "I have no rack," he says matter-of-factly. The interrogator's power is an illusion; if a detainee refuses to obey a stress order, an American interrogator has no recourse.

Martin risks a final display of his imaginary authority. "I get in his face, 'What do you think I will do next?'" he barks. In the captive's mind, days have passed, and he has no idea what awaits him. He discloses where he planted bombs on a road and where to find his associate. "The price?" Martin asks. "I made a man stand up. Is this unlawful coercion?"

Under a strict reading of the Geneva protections for prisoners of war, probably: the army forbids interrogators from even touching lawful combatants. But there is a huge gray area between the gold standard of POW treatment reserved for honorable opponents and torture, which consists of the intentional infliction of severe physical and mental pain. None of the stress techniques that the military has used in the war on terror comes remotely close to torture, despite the hysterical charges of administration critics. (The CIA's behavior remains a black box.) To declare non-torturous stress off-limits for an enemy who plays by no rules and accords no respect to Western prisoners is folly.

The soldiers used stress techniques to reinforce the traditional psychological approaches. Jeff (a pseudonym), an interrogator in Afghanistan, had been assigned a cocky English Muslim, who justified the 9/11 attacks because women had been working in the World Trade Center. The British citizen deflected all further questioning. Jeff questioned him for a day and a half, without letting him sleep and playing on his religious loyalties. "I broke him on his belief in Islam," Jeff recounts. "He realized he had messed up, because his Muslim brothers and sisters were also in the building." The Brit broke down and cried, then disclosed the mission that al-Qaida had put him on before capture. But once the prisoner was allowed to sleep for six hours, he again "clammed up."

Halfway across the globe, an identical debate had broken out, among interrogators who were encountering the same obstacles as the Afghanistan intelligence team. The U.S. base at Guantánamo was supposed to be getting the Afghanistan war's worst of the worst: the al-Qaida Arabs and their high Taliban allies.

FOXE'S *ACTS AND MONUMENTS* / ENGLISH SCHOOL (16TH CENTURY)/PRIVATE COLLECTION/BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

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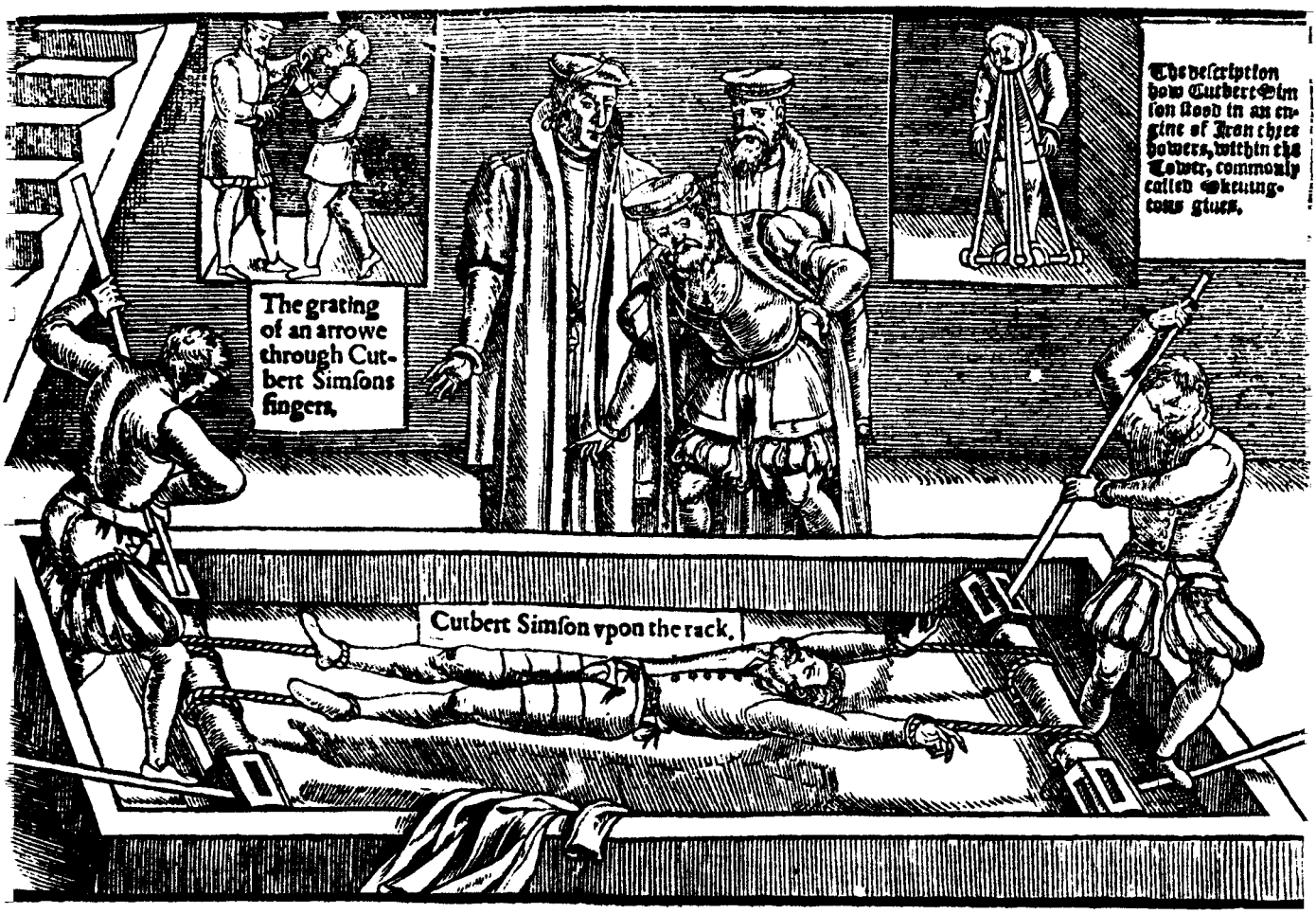
A true deſcription of the racking and cruell handling of
Cutbert Simſon in the Tower.
The deſcription how Cutbert Simſon ſtood in an engine of Iron three howers, within the Tower, commonly called Skeuingtons gyues.
The grating of an arrowe through Cutbert Simſons fingers.
Cutbert Simſon vpon the rack.

Extracting a confession on the rack in the early sixteenth century

Usama bin Ladin's driver and bodyguard were there, along with explosives experts, al-Qaida financiers and recruiters, would-be suicide recruits, and the architects of numerous attacks on civilian targets. They knew about al-Qaida's leadership structure, its communication methods, and its plans to attack the U.S. And they weren't talking. "They'd laugh at you; 'You've asked me this before,' they'd say contemptuously," reports Major General Michael Dunlavey, a former Guantánamo commanding officer. "Their resistance was tenacious. They'd already had 90 days in Afghanistan to get their cover stories together and to plan with their compatriots."

Even more than Afghanistan, Guantánamo dissipated any uncertainty the detainees might have had about the consequences of noncooperation. Consistent with the president's call for humane treatment, prisoners received expert medical care, three culturally appropriate meals each day, and daily opportunities for prayer, showers, and exercise. They had mail privileges and reading materials. Their biggest annoyance was boredom, recalls one interrogator. Many prisoners disliked the move from Camp X-Ray, the first facility used at the base, to the more commodious Camp Delta, because it curtailed their opportunities for homosexual sex, says an intelligence analyst. The captives protested every perceived infringement of their rights but, as in Afghanistan, ignored any reciprocal obligation. They hurled excrement and urine at guards, used their blankets as garrotes, and created additional weapons out of anything they could get their hands on—including a sink wrenched off a wall. Guards who responded to the attacks—with pepper spray or a water hose, say—got punished and, in one case, court-martialed.

Gitmo personnel disagreed sharply over what tools interrogators could legally use. The FBI took the most conservative position. When a bureau agent questioning Mohamedou Ould Slahi—

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a Mauritanian al-Qaida operative who had recruited two of the 9/11 pilots—was getting nothing of value, an army interrogator suggested, "Why don't you mention to him that conspiracy is a capital offense?" "That would be a violation of the Convention Against Torture," shot back the agent—on the theory that any covert threat inflicts "severe mental pain." Never mind that district attorneys and police detectives routinely invoke the possibility of harsh criminal penalties to get criminals to confess. Federal prosecutors in New York have even been known to remind suspects that they are more likely to keep their teeth and not end up as sex slaves by pleading to a federal offense, thus avoiding New York City's Rikers Island jail. Using such a method against an al-Qaida jihadist, by contrast, would be branded a serious humanitarian breach.

Top military commanders often matched the FBI's restraint, however. "It was ridiculous the things we couldn't do," recalls an army interrogator. "One guy said he would talk if he could see the ocean. It wasn't approved, because it would be a change of scenery"—a privilege that discriminated in favor of a cooperating detainee, as opposed to being available to all, regardless of their behavior.

Frustration with prisoner stonewalling reached a head with Mohamed al-Kahtani, a Saudi who had been fighting with Usama bin Ladin's bodyguards in Afghanistan in December 2001. By July 2002, analysts had figured out that Kahtani was the missing 20th hijacker. He had flown into Orlando International Airport from Dubai on August 4, 2001, but a sharp-eyed customs agent had denied him entry. Waiting for him at the other side of the gate was Mohamed Atta.

Kahtani's resistance strategies were flawless. Around the first anniversary of 9/11, urgency to get information on al-Qaida grew. Finally, army officials at Guantánamo prepared a legal analysis of their interrogation options and requested permission from Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to use various stress techniques on Kahtani. Their memo, sent up the bureaucratic chain on October 11, 2002, triggered a fierce six-month struggle in Washington among military lawyers, administration officials, and Pentagon chiefs about interrogation in the war on terror.

To read the techniques requested is to understand how restrained the military has been in its approach to terror detainees—and how utterly false the torture narrative has been. Here's what the interrogators assumed they could *not* do without clearance from the secretary of defense: yell at detainees (though never in their ears), use deception (such as posing as Saudi intelligence agents), and put detainees on MREs (meals ready to eat—vacuum-sealed food pouches eaten by millions of soldiers, as well as vacationing backpackers) instead of hot rations. The interrogators promised that this dangerous dietary measure would be used only *in extremis*, pending local approval and special training.

The most controversial technique approved was "mild, non-injurious physical contact such as grabbing, poking in the chest with the finger, and light pushing," to be reserved only for a "very small percentage of the most uncooperative detainees" believed to possess critical intelligence. A detainee could be poked only after review by Gitmo's commanding general of intelligence and the commander of the U.S. Southern Command in Miami, and only pursuant to "careful coordination" and monitoring.

None of this remotely approaches torture or cruel or degrading treatment. Nevertheless, fanatically cautious Pentagon lawyers revolted, claiming that the methods approved for Kahtani violated international law. Uncharacteristically irresolute, Rumsfeld rescinded the Guantánamo techniques in January 2003. Kahtani's interrogation hung fire for three months, while a Washington committee, with representatives from the undersecretary of defense, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the air force, army, navy, and marine corps, and attorneys from every branch of the military, considered how to approach the 20th hijacker.

The outcome of this massive deliberation was more restrictive than the Geneva conventions themselves, even though they were to apply only to unlawful combatants, not conventional

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prisoners of war, and only to those held at Guantánamo Bay. It is worth scrutinizing the final 24 techniques Rumsfeld approved for terrorists at Gitmo in April 2003, since these are the techniques that the media presents as the source of "torture" at Abu Ghraib. The torture narrative holds that illegal methods used at Guantánamo migrated to Iraq and resulted in the abuse of prisoners there.

So what were these cruel and degrading practices? For one, providing a detainee an incentive for cooperation—such as a cigarette or, especially favored in Cuba, a McDonald's Filet-O-Fish sandwich or a Twinkie unless specifically approved by the secretary of defense. In other words, if an interrogator had learned that Usama bin Ladin's accountant loved Cadbury chocolate, and intended to enter the interrogation booth armed with a Dairy Milk Wafer to extract the name of a Saudi financier, he needed to "specifically determine that military necessity requires" the use of the Dairy Milk Wafer and send an alert to Secretary Rumsfeld that chocolate was to be deployed against an al-Qaida operative.

Similar restrictions—a specific finding of military necessity and notice to Rumsfeld—applied to other tried-and-true army psychological techniques. These included "Pride and Ego Down"—attacking a detainee's pride to goad him into revealing critical information—as well as "Mutt and Jeff," the classic good cop–bad cop routine of countless police shows. Isolating a detainee from other prisoners to prevent collaboration and to increase his need to talk required not just notice and a finding of military necessity but "detailed implementation instructions [and] medical and psychological review."

The only non-conventional "stress" techniques on the final Guantánamo list are such innocuous interventions as adjusting the temperature or introducing an unpleasant smell into the interrogation room, but only if the interrogator is present at all times; reversing a detainee's sleep cycles from night to day (call this the "Flying to Hong Kong" approach); and convincing a detainee that his interrogator is not from the U.S.

Note that none of the treatments shown in the Abu Ghraib photos, such as nudity or the use of dogs, was included in the techniques certified for the unlawful combatants held in Cuba. And those mild techniques that were certified could only be used with extensive bureaucratic oversight and medical monitoring to ensure "humane," "safe," and "lawful" application.

"Interrogators would play 'Enter Sandman' by the heavy-metal group Metallica, which brought Kahtani to tears."

After Rumsfeld cleared the 24 methods, interrogators approached Kahtani once again. They relied almost exclusively on isolation and lengthy interrogations. They also used some "psy-ops" (psychological operations). Ten or so interrogators would gather and sing the Rolling Stones' "Time Is on My Side" outside Kahtani's cell. Sometimes they would play a recording of "Enter Sandman" by the heavy-metal group Metallica, which brought Kahtani to tears, because he thought (not implausibly) he was hearing the sound of Satan.

Finally, at 4 AM—after an 18-hour, occasionally loud, interrogation, during which Kahtani head-butted his interrogators—he started giving up information, convinced that he was being sold out by his buddies. The entire process had been conducted under the watchful eyes of a medic, a psychiatrist, and lawyers, to make sure that no harm was done. Kahtani provided detailed information on his meetings with Usama bin Ladin, on Jose Padilla and Richard Reid, and on Adnan El Shukrijumah, one of the FBI's most wanted terrorists, believed to be wandering between South and North America.

Since then, according to Pentagon officials, none of the non-traditional techniques approved for Kahtani has been used on anyone else at Guantánamo Bay.

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The final strand in the "torture narrative" is the least grounded in actual practice, but it has had the most distorting effect on the public debate. In the summer of 2002, the CIA sought legal advice about permissible interrogation techniques for the recently apprehended Abu Zubaydah, Usama bin Ladin's chief recruiter in the 1990s. The Palestinian Zubaydah had already been sentenced to death in absentia in Jordan for an abortive plot to bomb hotels there during the millennium celebration; he had arranged to obliterate the Los Angeles airport on the same night. The CIA wanted to use techniques on Zubaydah that the military uses on marines and other elite fighters in Survive, Evade, Resist, Escape (SERE) school, which teaches how to withstand torture and other pressures to collaborate. The techniques are classified, but none allegedly involves physical contact. (Later, the CIA is said to have used "water-boarding"—temporarily submerging a detainee in water to induce the sensation of drowning—on Khalid Sheik Mohammad, the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks. Water-boarding is the most extreme method the CIA has applied, according to a former Justice Department attorney, and arguably it crosses the line into torture.)

In response to the CIA's request, Assistant Attorney General Jay S. Bybee produced a hair-raising memo that understandably caused widespread alarm. Bybee argued that a U.S. law ratifying the 1984 Convention Against Torture—covering all persons, whether lawful combatants or not—forbade only physical pain equivalent to that "accompanying serious physical injury, such as organ failure, impairment of bodily function, or even death," or mental pain that resulted in "significant psychological harm of significant duration, e.g., lasting for months or even years." More troubling still, Bybee concluded that the torture statute and international humanitarian treaties did not bind the executive branch in wartime.

This infamous August "torture memo" represents the high (or low) point of the Bush administration's theory of untrammeled presidential war-making power. But note: it had nothing to do with the interrogation debates and experiments unfolding among Pentagon interrogators in Afghanistan and Cuba. These soldiers struggling with al-Qaida resistance were perfectly ignorant about executive-branch deliberations on the outer boundaries of pain and executive power (which, in any case, were prepared for and seen only by the CIA). "We had no idea what went on in Washington," said Chris Mackey in an interview. A Guantánamo lawyer involved in the Kahtani interrogation echoes Mackey: "We were not aware of the [Justice Department and White House] debates." Interrogators in Iraq were equally unaware of the Bybee memo.

Nevertheless, when the Bybee analysis was released in June 2004, it became the capstone on the torture narrative, the most damning link between the president's decision that the Geneva conventions didn't apply to terrorists and the sadistic behavior of the military guards at Abu Ghraib. Seymour Hersh, the left-wing journalist who broke the Abu Ghraib story, claims that the Bybee torture memo was the "most suggestive document, in terms of what was really going on inside military prisons and detention centers."

But not only is the Bybee memo irrelevant to what happened in Abu Ghraib; so, too, are the previous interrogation debates in Afghanistan and Cuba. The abuse at Abu Ghraib resulted from the Pentagon's failure to plan for any outcome of the Iraq invasion except the most rosy scenario, its failure to respond to the insurgency once it broke out, and its failure to keep military discipline from collapsing in the understaffed Abu Ghraib facility. Interrogation rules were beside the point.

As the avalanche of prisoners taken in the street fighting overwhelmed the inadequate contingent of guards and officers at Abu Ghraib, order within the ranks broke down as thoroughly as order in the operation of the prison itself. Soldiers talked back to their superiors, refused to wear uniforms, operated prostitution and bootlegging rings, engaged in rampant and public sexual misbehavior, covered the facilities with graffiti, and indulged in drinking binges while on duty. No one knew who was in command. The guards' sadistic and sexualized treatment of prisoners was just an extension of the chaos they

AN ILLUSTRATION FROM J. DAMHOUDERE'S *CRIMINAL PRACTICES* (1556) SHOWING A PRISONER BEING INTERROGATED AND TORTURED/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

A standard interrogation in 1556

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were already wallowing in with no restraint from above. Meanwhile, prisoners regularly rioted; insurgents shelled the compound almost daily; the army sent only rotten, bug-infested rations; and the Iraqi guards sold favors to the highest bidders among the insurgents.

The idea that the abuse of the Iraqi detainees resulted from the president's decision on the applicability of the Geneva conventions to al-Qaida and Taliban detainees is absurd on several grounds. Everyone in the military chain of command emphasized repeatedly that the Iraq conflict would be governed by the conventions in their entirety. The interrogation rules that local officers developed for Iraq explicitly stated that they were promulgated under Geneva authority, and that the conventions applied. Moreover, almost all the behavior shown in the photographs occurred in the dead of night among military police, wholly separate from interrogations. Most abuse victims were not even scheduled to be interrogated, because they were of no intelligence value. Finally, except for the presence of dogs, none of the behavior shown in the photos was included in the interrogation rules promulgated in Iraq. Mandated masturbation, dog leashes, assault, and stacking naked prisoners in pyramids—none of these depredations was an approved (or even contemplated) interrogation practice, and no interrogator ordered the military guards to engage in them.

It *is* the case that intelligence officers in Iraq and Afghanistan were making use of nudity and phobias about dogs at the time. Nudity was not officially sanctioned, and the official rule about dogs only allowed their "presence" in the interrogation booth, not their being sicced on naked detainees. The argument that such techniques contributed to a dehumanization of the detainees, which in turn led to their abuse, is not wholly implausible. Whether or not those two particular stressors are worth defending (and many interrogators say they are not), their abuse should not discredit the validity of other stress techniques that the military was cautiously experimenting with in the months before Abu Ghraib.

That experiment is over. Reeling under the PR disaster of Abu Ghraib, the Pentagon shut down every stress technique but one—isolation—and that can be used only after extensive review. An interrogator who so much as requests permission to question a detainee into the night could be putting his career in jeopardy. Even the traditional army psychological approaches have fallen under a deep cloud of suspicion: deflating a detainee's ego, aggressive but non-physical histrionics, and good cop–bad cop have been banished along with sleep deprivation.

Timidity among officers prevents the energetic application of those techniques that remain. Interrogation plans have to be triple-checked all the way up through the Pentagon by officers who have never conducted an interrogation in their lives.

In losing these techniques, interrogators have lost the ability to create the uncertainty vital to getting terrorist information. Since the Abu Ghraib scandal broke, the military has made public nearly every record of its internal interrogation debates, providing al-Qaida analysts with an encyclopedia of U.S. methods and constraints. Those constraints make perfectly clear that the interrogator is not in control. "In reassuring the world about our limits, we have destroyed our biggest asset: detainee doubt," a senior Pentagon intelligence official laments.

Soldiers on the ground are noticing the consequences. "The Iraqis already know the game. They know how to play us," a marine chief warrant officer told the *Wall Street Journal* in August. "Unless you catch the Iraqis in the act, it is very hard to pin anything on anyone . . . . We can't even use basic police interrogation tactics."

And now the rights advocates, energized by the Abu Ghraib debacle, are making one final push to halt interrogation altogether. In the *New York Times*'s words, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is now condemning the thoroughly emasculated interrogation process at Guantánamo Bay as a "system devised to break the will of the prisoners [and] make them wholly dependent on their interrogators." In other words, the ICRC opposes traditional interrogation itself, since *all* interrogation is designed

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to "break the will of prisoners" and make them feel "dependent on their interrogators." But according to an ICRC report leaked to the *Times*, "the construction of such a system, whose stated purpose is the production of intelligence, cannot be considered other than an intentional system of cruel, unusual and degrading treatment and a form of torture."

But contrary to the fantasies of the international-law and human rights lobbies, a world in which all interrogation is illegal and rights are indiscriminately doled out is not a safer or more just world. Were the United States to announce that terrorists would be protected under the Geneva conventions, it would destroy any incentive our ruthless enemies have to comply with the laws of war. The *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* understood that truth in 1987, when they supported President Ronald Reagan's rejection of an amendment to the Geneva conventions that would have granted lawful-combatant status to terrorists. Today, however, those same opinion makers have done an about-face, though the most striking feature of their denunciations of the Bush administration's Geneva decisions is their failure to offer *any* explanation for how al-Qaida could possibly be covered under the plain meaning of the text.

The Pentagon is revising the rules for interrogation. If we hope to succeed in the war on terror, the final product *must* allow interrogators to use stress techniques against unlawful combatants. Chris Mackey testifies to how "ineffective schoolhouse methods were in getting prisoners to talk." He warns that his team "failed to break prisoners who I have no doubt knew of terrorist plots or at least terrorist cells that may one day do us harm. Perhaps they would have talked if faced with harsher methods."

The stress techniques that the military has used to date are not torture; the advocates can only be posturing in calling them such. On its website, Human Rights Watch lists the effects of real torture: "from pain and swelling to broken bones, irreparable neurological damage, and chronic painful musculoskeletal problems . . . [to] long-term depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, marked sleep disturbances and alterations in self-perceptions, not to mention feelings of powerlessness, of fear, guilt and shame." Though none of the techniques that Pentagon interrogators have employed against al-Qaida comes anywhere close to risking such effects, Human Rights Watch nevertheless follows up its list with an accusation of torture against the Bush administration.

The pressure on the Pentagon to outlaw stress techniques won't abate, as the American Civil Liberties Union continues to release formerly classified government documents obtained in a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit concerning detention and interrogation. As of late December, the memos have merely confirmed that the FBI opposes stress methods, though the press breathlessly portrays them as confirming "torture."

Human Rights Watch, the ICRC, Amnesty International, and the other self-professed guardians of humanitarianism need to come back to earth—to the real world in which torture means what the Nazis and the Japanese did in their concentration and POW camps in World War II; the world in which evil regimes, like those we fought in Afghanistan and Iraq, don't follow the Miranda rules or the Convention Against Torture but instead gas children, bury people alive, set wild animals on soccer players who lose, and hang adulterous women by truckloads before stadiums full of spectators; the world in which barbarous death cults behead female aid workers, bomb crowded railway stations, and fly planes filled with hundreds of innocent passengers into buildings filled with thousands of innocent and unsuspecting civilians. By definition, our terrorist enemies and their state supporters have declared themselves enemies of the civilized order and its humanitarian rules. In fighting them, we must of course hold ourselves to our own high moral standards without, however, succumbing to the utopian illusion that we can prevail while immaculately observing every precept of the Sermon on the Mount. It is the necessity of this fallen world that we must oppose evil with force; and we must use all the lawful means necessary to ensure that good, rather than evil, triumphs.

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Postmodern War

Weaker enemies have learned to use our strengths against us. This time, they'll lose.

DAVID, JACQUES LOUIS (1748–1825)/LEONIDAS AT THE THERMOPYLAE. (1814)/LOUVRE, PARIS, FRANCE/ART RESOURCE, NY

With Western discipline and resolve, Leonidas and 300 Spartans fought to the last man to hold back an entire Persian army at Thermopylae.

Victor Davis Hanson

It is still suicidal to meet the United States in a conventional war—at least for any enemy that has not fully adopted Western arms, discipline, logistics, and military organization. The recent abrupt collapse of both the Taliban and Saddam Hussein's regime amply proves the folly of fighting America in direct conflicts. The military dynamism that enables the United States to intervene militarily in the Middle East—in a manner in which even the richest Middle Eastern countries could not intervene in North America—is not an accident of geography or a reflection of genes, but a result of culture. Our classical

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Western approaches to politics, religion, and economics—including consensual government, free markets, secularism, a strong middle class, and individual freedom—eventually translate on the battlefield into better-equipped, motivated, disciplined, and supported soldiers.

To an American television audience, al-Qaida videos of pajama-clad killers in ski masks beheading captives look scary, of course. But a platoon of Rangers would slaughter hundreds of them in seconds if they ever approached Americans openly on the field of conventional battle or even for brief moments of clear firing. In Mogadishu, Somalia, everything boded ill for a few trapped Americans—outnumbered, far from home, facing local hostility in urban warfare—and yet the real lesson was not that a few Americans were tragically killed, but that the modern successors to Xenophon's Ten Thousand or the Redcoats at Rorke's Drift managed to shoot their way out and kill over 1,000 in the process.

Nevertheless, the numerous setbacks of Western armies from Thermopylae to Vietnam prove that there are several ways to nullify these military advantages, both on conventional and irregular battlefields. The question is: Are such historical precedents still relevant to the modern age?

ELMER/THE ART ARCHIVE/EILEEN TWEEDY

Internal dissent: . . .

From early times, enemies have obtained superficial parity by a sort of military parasitism—by buying, stealing, or cloning Western weaponry. The galleys and guns of the Ottoman forces at Lepanto without exception were copies of Venetian designs, for example, as was the Turkish arsenal itself at Constantinople. In 1850, Japan had virtually no munitions industry, no oceanic fleet, and no organized naval corps; by 1905, its ships were among the best in the world and soundly defeated a Russian armada—but only after tens of thousands of Japanese students for a half century had studied at European universities and military academies. From Europe, the Japanese had systematically imported everything from Western notions of command to advanced optics and metallurgy.

Today, China is a similar example. Like the Ottomans and the nineteenth-century Japanese, the Chinese military believes that it can either purchase or steal Western computer, aeronautical, and nuclear technology—while skipping bothersome Western notions like democracy and free speech—in order to obtain military parity with the United States. The Arab world too has sought to match Israel with MiGs, Scuds, SAMs, and RPGs—technology that it could neither design nor fabricate, but that it believed could give its autocracies the ability to destroy a democratic, highly sophisticated Jewish state all the same. Every rocket-propelled grenade that kills an American in the Sunni Triangle is either imported from the West or fabricated in the region according to Western blueprints and designs.

Yet in the long run, such imported technological expertise cannot be maintained, constantly improved, or used to its optimum potential with-

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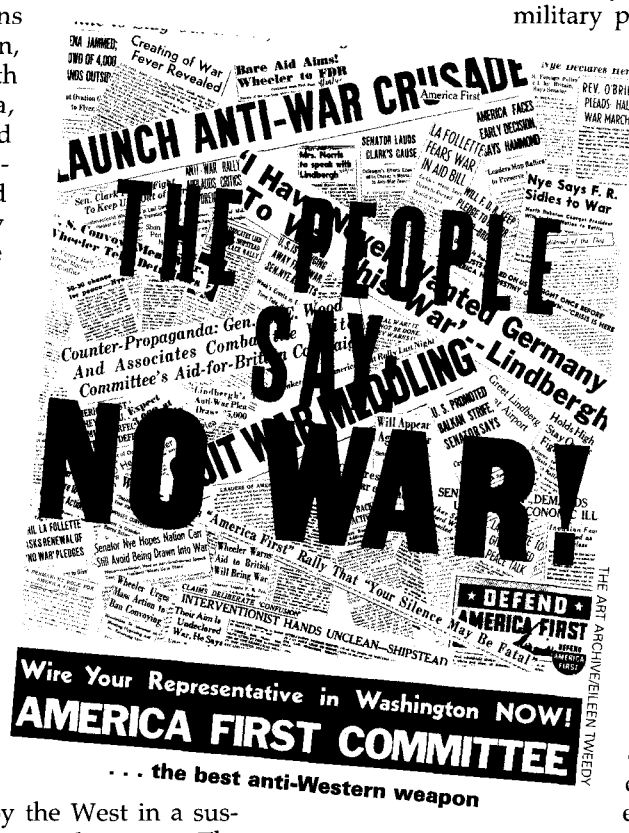
out free citizens, secular universities, transparent government, and open inquiry. These intangible values and concrete institutions are the real engines that drive the modern Western ability to field high-tech arms and disciplined soldiers in the first place. For all the worry about weapons of mass destruction, neither Iran, nor North Korea, nor Libya, despite the purchased veneer of a sophisticated military, could ever defeat a militarily serious Western state of comparable size unless it underwent radical social and cultural democratic reform—which ironically might then deprive it of any impulse to attack the West in the first place.

In an age of germs, gas, and nukes, however, the ultimate nightmare of present-day military parasitism is not that terrorists or autocrats could defeat or destroy the West in a sustained conventional or nuclear war. The concern, rather, is that enemies could inflict enough damage in a moment of complacency and laxity here at home to kill tens of thousands of U.S. civilians through a single strike—or at least blackmail us by offering proof of the ability to do precisely that.

Given the present lethality of modern weapons, a hostile state or terrorist clique can obtain an odd sort of parity with Western militaries, even though its aggregate arsenal is not equivalent to the West's: al-Qaida or Iran cannot fabricate or purchase B-2 bombers but might nonetheless obtain a nuclear weapon. And because these extremists profess to be willing to lose thousands or even an entire country to take out the center of New York, negotiations and concessions would follow that did not reflect the actual relative military strength of the two belligerents. No civilization can exist for long with a series of 9/11-like attacks that destroy its icons of financial and military power, and in a few seconds inflict a trillion dollars of economic damage.



THE ART ARCHIVE/EILEEN TWEEDY

. . . the best anti-Western weapon

There are other ways to check Western advantage besides achieving such superficial arms parity. Western powers can be turned against one another through outside invitation or bribery, or by fanning rivalries over perceived self-interest—and such conflicts could aid an otherwise weaker adversary. Thankfully, out-and-out fratricide is rarer these days, because the spread of Western democracy tends to discourage consensual governments from attacking one another in the way that Sparta fought Athens or Europe tore itself apart during the twentieth century. Should Syria or the Palestinians ever develop a full-fledged democracy analogous to Israel's, problems over borders more likely would be adjudicated peacefully rather than through conventional wars or terrorism.

But while it is highly unlikely that the full array of Western military advantages could be turned against itself, what is far more plausible is something like the lead-up to the 2003 Iraqi war. Saddam expended ill-gotten billions to encourage France, Germany, and Russia to restrain the U.S. through a UN veto—hoping to achieve a

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diplomatic triangulation similar to the United States's forcing the cancellation of the Anglo-French-Israeli invasion of Suez in 1956.

More usual, however, than this state-to-state check on Western military operations is the hindrance that comes from internal dissent. Given that Westerners are usually more liberal, consensual, and affluent than their adversaries, they are sometimes slow to risk peace and prosperity to prepare for, much less preempt, distant dangers on the horizon. Civilian audit brings military dividends in the long run by forcing officers to render constant accounts of their decisions and face consequences for their blunders. Nevertheless, these same democratic citizenries often hesitate in peacetime to make needed sacrifices—think of the classical Athenians' acrimony over Themistocles' peacetime diversion of income from the Athenian silver mines to craft an Athenian fleet that would later destroy Xerxes' armada, or the narrow approval of an American draft by a single vote on the eve of World War II. Much of the American weaponry used today in the war against terror was authorized only by narrow margins and subject to great acrimony during the senatorial debates over the controversial Reagan-era buildup in hopes of reestablishing credible deterrence against the Soviet Union.

Thus a weaker enemy can hope to persuade or frighten a majority of its adversary's citizens to reject the war party, and to come to its terms or simply quit, by such means as the rather crude Soviet Union propaganda efforts in the cold war or by appealing to deep-seated Western pacifism. More recently, terrorists have grasped that the enormous wealth and privilege of Western society in the postwar half century have convinced many Americans and Europeans that avoiding war altogether, rather than preparedness and deterrence, is critical to maintaining their present tranquillity. Usama bin Ladin's own fatwas invoke America's purported inability to take casualties, while Saddam Hussein stockpiled morale-boosting DVD copies of *Black Hawk Down*, on the logic that the movie showed how irregulars in block-to-block fighting might force conventional American troops to go home by shattering their leaders' morale.

Precisely because terrorists believe that life is awfully good in the West (and relatively less so in their own environs), they compute success by a different, asymmetrical arithmetic: killing a few of us, even if it means losing a lot of their own, is what brings victory—withdrawal of American forces under waves of media carping and popular outcry. Bin Ladin, Saddam's remnants, and the like all believe that there is a magical and relatively small number of fatalities—600? 1,000? 4,000?—in any one campaign beyond which Americans will conclude that fights like those in Afghanistan and Iraq simply are not worth the effort and anguish. And they may well be right. Who, after all, wants to raise a son in the San Jose suburbs, with a B.A. from UCLA, to die in the filthy streets of Sadr City seeking to bring democracy to tribal fundamentalists?

Thus many Americans conclude that the short-term and daily televised costs of pacifying Iraq add up to a grave moral and political mistake. They resent the immediate suffering involved in the long-term goal of changing the landscape of the Middle East to end terrorism sponsored or tolerated by petroleum-funded Arab autocrats who, at least in public, blame the Americans for their own glaring political and economic failures. Such aims might make long-term moral and political sense, but when CNN or NPR interviews an amputee maimed by an improvised explosive device, it is hard for 300 million other Americans not to think that his misery was preventable—or might just as easily have befallen their own children or spouses. Like the British and Israeli public who tired of war when hundreds of innocents were blown apart in Belfast and Jerusalem, the American citizenry feels that it cannot withdraw and yet cannot quite stay either. In the terrorists' logic, each explosion is intended not to destroy incrementally the U.S. military—that task is impossible—but to lower its morale and, more important, to convince the suburbanite back home that the carnage on his screen is his to stop.

So besides military parasitism and the checks and balances inherent in a consensual society, there is yet another means of countering Western military advantage: what we might loosely call

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the perceptions of asymmetrical conflict, also called "irregular" or "fourth-dimensional" warfare. Such militarily inferior forces—often not nation-states, as al-Qaida and the Iraqi terrorists demonstrate—prefer terrorism, assassination, and bombings to nullify Western military power. What we see as uncontestable strength—plentiful hardware, massive firepower—they seek to turn into weakness. Perceived underdogs in the shadow of this overwhelming military superiority, they also enjoy the satisfaction of besting their betters, as well as of hurting or killing someone to whom life has been immeasurably more kind—and therefore perceived as more dear. Taking out an Abrams tank or an Apache helicopter, whatever the cost in insurgent lives, sends a message that the illiterate and ill-equipped can, like David, take down Goliath.

"Taking out an Apache sends a message that the illiterate and ill-equipped can, like David, take down Goliath."

And because asymmetrical warfare is inherently political, victory often entails merely hurting rather than defeating a superior enemy—to the applause of local civilian bystanders, who may cringe at their terrorist brethren's methods and aims but nonetheless still enjoy a little blood sport from time to time, especially if those dying are rich, haughty, and occupying Americans, restrained by the Geneva convention and their own scruples in their retaliation.

This one-sided fighting has one prerequisite: the terrorist avoids open identification with any conventional military target or supportive infrastructure subject to Western military reappraisal. Slobodan Milošević's fatal error was that the world finally concluded that his goons in Bosnia and Kosovo really *were* slaughtering on his orders. Thus the people of Belgrade could legitimately be held responsible for their rogue leader's sponsorship of genocide. And when they were held responsible—when precise GPS targeting, rather than random carpet bombing of civilians, took out vital infrastructure and sent the message that "life will be more difficult until you hand over Milošević"—the killing stopped. If the West finds an easily identifiable target and its selection passes moral muster back home, then it can often attack with little constraint.

Historically, there has been a wide variety of ways of conducting wars in the "wrong place at the wrong time against the wrong enemy"—asymmetrical conflicts that have nevertheless led to Western victory. Given that the West often feels constrained from using its full array of military power—increasingly so in the present age of instant global communications—there has emerged a now time-honored four-part strategy: hunting down insurgents with lighter, highly trained commandos; creating local militias and providing them both status and high-profile public exposure; offering a political and economic alternative that promises visible and rapid improvement in the quality of life; and sealing borders to ensure that outside volunteers and supplies, whether in Korea, Vietnam, or present-day Iraq, do not swell insurgent ranks.

In the context of Iraq, the United States has been adept at killing terrorists, moderately successful in promoting freedom and material improvement, tardy in its efforts to create an Iraqi national army to spearhead security and earn the respect of fellow Iraqis, and mostly unsuccessful in preventing Saudis, Iranians, Jordanians, and Syrians from flowing into Iraq. Yet whenever all of these four requisites have not been met, failure has usually followed, despite overwhelming firepower—as for example in Afghanistan in the 1980s, when the Soviets indiscriminately slaughtered civilians, sought to impose an autocratic and foreign atheism on a deeply tribal and religious people, and were unsuccessful in isolating and killing the mujahideen, much less stopping

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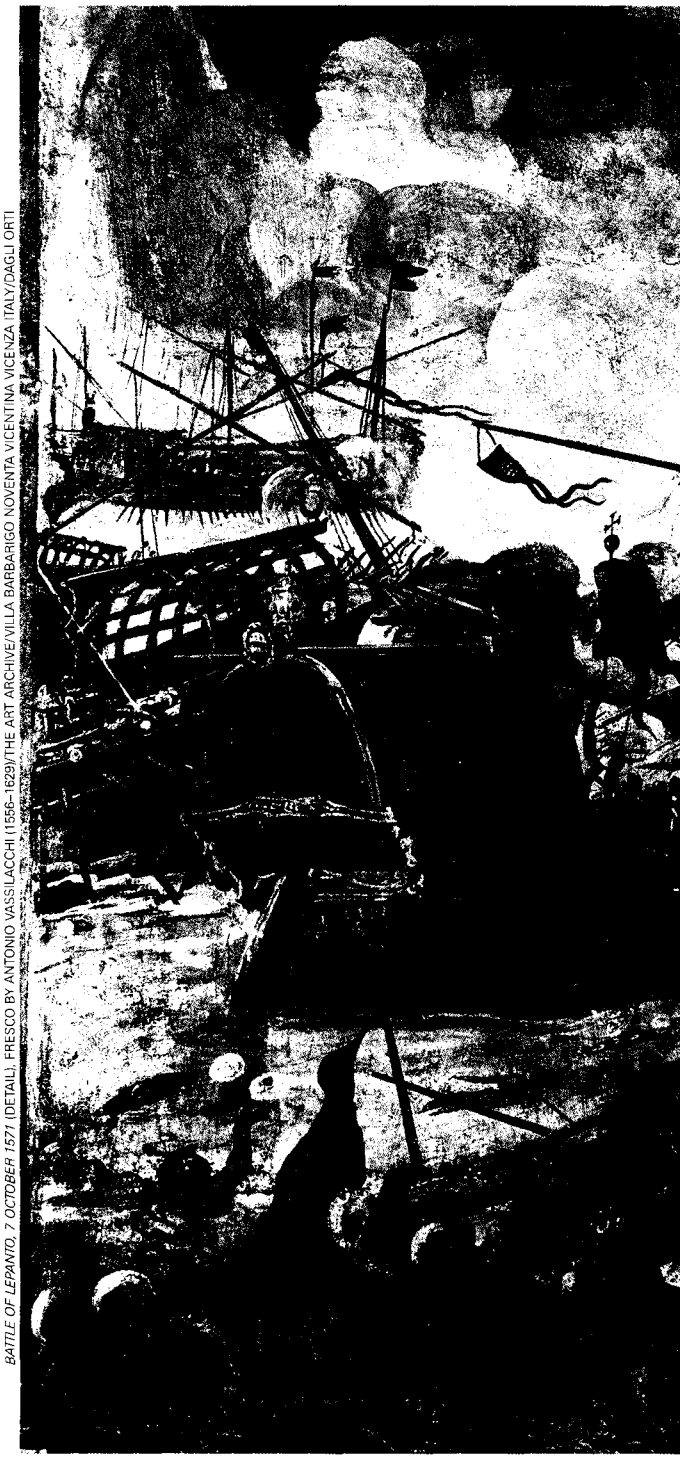
the importation of jihadists and sophisticated weapons from Pakistan.

Israel, in contrast, has been more successful in hunting down Hamas terrorists, often careful to focus attacks on killers while sparing civilians, but abjectly unsuccessful in either cutting off money and weapons from Europe and the Arab world or convincing the Palestinians that Israel offers a political solution preferable to their own current misery. And so the mess continues, and the war becomes the focus of great controversy inside Israel, as tactical victories do not turn into strategic successes: either the Israelis must stop the money and munitions from getting to the terrorists and craft some sort of autonomous democratic government on the West Bank, or forgo limited war altogether and consider the struggle a conventional fight, with no restraints on the full use of its overwhelming Western arsenal.

Americans and most Westerners know how to achieve success in an Afghanistan and understand what led to failure in Vietnam, Lebanon, and Somalia. But as the recent Iraqi experience suggests, new factors have constrained Western militaries even further in conducting irregular wars in the twenty-first century. Moreover, the terrorists are keenly sensitive to the ever-changing nature of war and feel the combination of globalization and postmodern thought has given them an advantage in the present cycle of unending challenge and response.

First, it is now a cliché that cell phones, the Internet, and 24-hour cable news with live battlefield feeds can distort the pulse of war, presenting sensational and sometimes one-sided imagery of violence without offering much tactical or strategic explanation. The usual response to watching a young man fall dead in the street before a live camera is not to ask who killed him and why, but rather to focus solely on the mayhem and understand it as emblematic of the futility of war in general and in particular the culpability of a stronger, bullying United States for conducting such operations. Thus a



BATTLE OF LEPANTO, 7 OCTOBER 1571 (DETAIL), FRESCO BY ANTONIO VASSILACCHI (1556–1629)/THE ART ARCHIVE/VILLA BARBARIGO NOVENTA VICENTINA VICENZA ITALY/DAGLI ORTI

At Lepanto in 1571, the Turkish galleys were copies of their Venetian adversaries' designs.

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teenager with an RPG who is shot down can do more damage to the U.S. effort by dying on global television than he ever could by hitting an American Humvee.

Second, the rise of the therapeutic culture, coupled with the marvels of modern medicine and technology, promises that it is our birthright to have perpetual youth, good looks, longevity, peace of mind, and lives free of sacrifice and danger. Multicultural tolerance and utopian pacifism imagine that old grievances that threaten our present tranquillity and affluence belong to a prior age, a primeval time before conflict-resolution theory and the UN convinced us that disagreement was not a result of evil actions or incompatible worldviews, but more likely of misunderstanding and thus capable of remedy through dialogue and reason.

In such a perfect storm of sophisticated global communications and therapeutic culture, soldiers who feel a mission is too risky can phone or e-mail home to complain to their parents 7,000 miles away. A concerned mom can then contact local media in hopes that officers in Iraq learn about the insubordination only after 10 million Americans have first seen it interpreted by telejournalists in two-minute sound bites. Our insensitive grandparents would call such machinations mutiny. We in our wisdom are more likely to deem them misunderstandings or even legitimate grievances.

Third, terrorists are ever more politically savvy about Western society, sophisticated enough to time attacks in Madrid or in Iraq so as to discourage suburban Spanish or American voters with images of limbs in the street or heads rolling on a prayer carpet. In like manner, a webpage, a single university professor, and a "human rights" group based in London can all report wholesale civilian casualties, the more sensational the better, without much information about how they came up with such numbers, in hopes that Westerners will not just worry about losing their own, but decry their troops' killing of others.

In short, today's Western soldier must accept not just the burden that he has far more to lose—material pleasure, affluence, and a culturally based sense of individual worth—than his adversary, not just that his death or injury will be seen as argument against his mission, not just that his very conversation may be filmed and recorded for political purposes, but also that his killing of those trying to kill him will be used to denigrate both his mission and his morality.

Unlike Americans conducting counterinsurgency in Vietnam, today's soldiers in Iraq must not only win hearts and minds, be extremely discriminating in separating civilians from terrorist killers, keep out foreign reinforcements and aid, but also do all that in a way that convinces the voter back home that they are more peacekeepers than warriors, and kill only in self-defense.

Can the United States conduct warfare under such restrictions? In the cold war, conventional doctrine held that the fear of mutual assured destruction would forever circumscribe escalation beyond the conventional battlefield. But in our postmodern age, the West's own cultural, humanitarian, and political inhibitions about war-making have proved just as powerful constraints as nuclear Armageddon. Our parents feared Soviet nuclear retaliation if we intervened abroad; we limit our options out of fear of the anger of Germany, France, or the UN. Or so we profess in times of relative peace.

Yet lost in all this confusion is the recognition that the essence of war remains unchanged—the use of force to eliminate an adversary, coerce an opponent to alter his behavior, or prevent annihilation. Technology, modern social theory, the ease and luxury of the West—these are simply the delivery systems that change with the ages, but do not alter or affect the substance of conflict. In our present context, all our concern about American combat casualties would vanish should there be another mass murder similar to 9/11. Like ancient man, postmodern man is hardwired to survive, and thus really will use his full arsenal when faced with the alternative of extinction. Should we lose the stock exchange or the White House, there would be almost no calls for restraint against states that harbored or aided the perpetrators, on the logic that every terrorist must sleep, eat, and use an ATM card somewhere.

But what about the far more likely scenario of guerrilla wars and counterinsurgency? In such

CIRCA 300 AD. ROMAN SOLDIERS FIRING LARGE ARROWS FROM A CATAPULT/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

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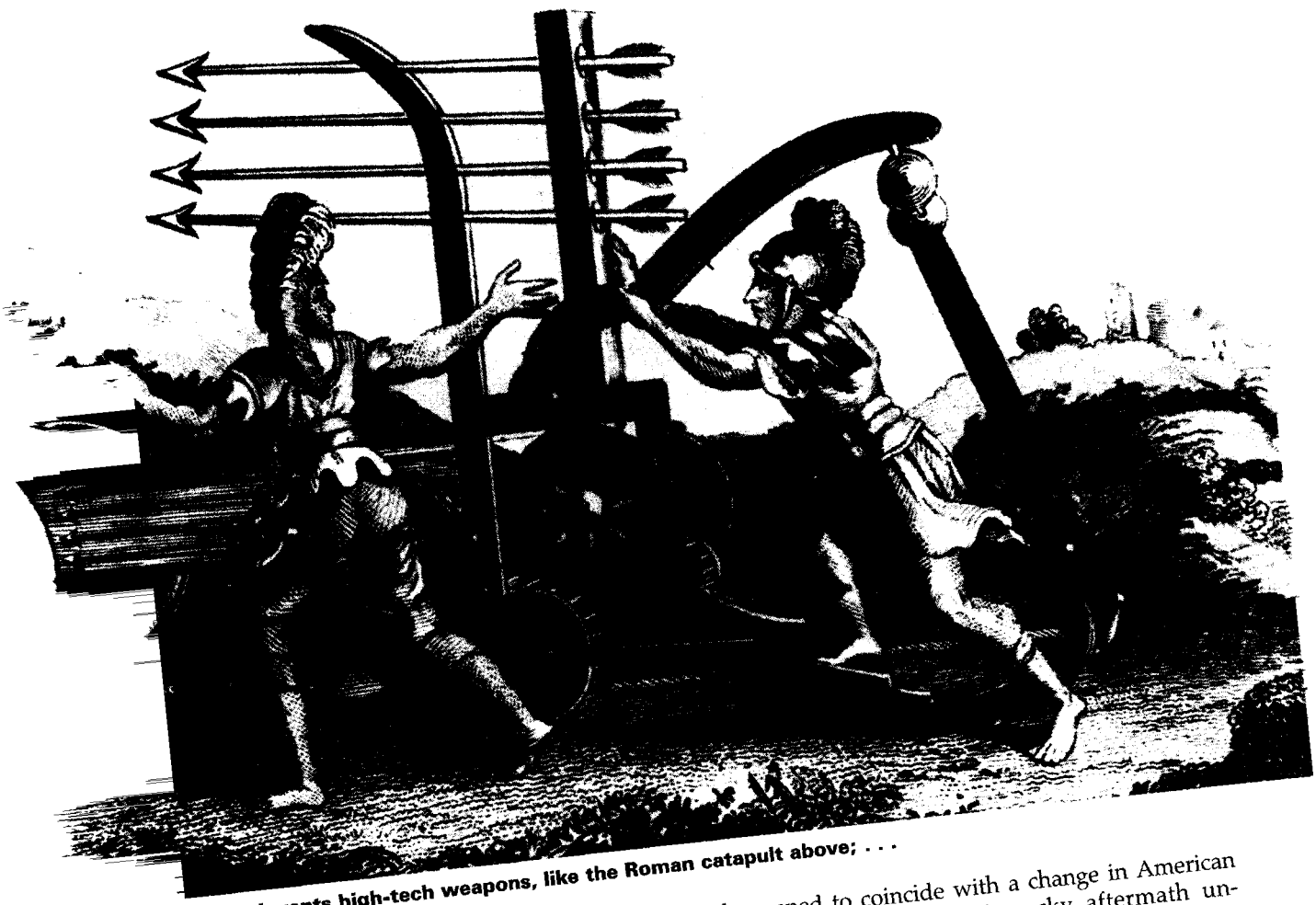

The West invents high-tech weapons, like the Roman catapult above; . . .

lesser conflicts, the human desire for victory still trumps most other considerations. The hysteria over the Iraqi war in the 2004 election did not really result from a failure to find weapons of mass destruction or to publicize a clear link between al-Qaida and Saddam Hussein's Iraq. These were issues raised after the fact for political purposes during a campaign that happened to coincide with a change in American perceptions as the war's rocky aftermath unfolded. After all, on the eve of the invasion over 65 percent of Americans supported the war, and three weeks later, when Saddam's statue fell, support was nearing 70 percent. The current depressing debate about preemption, allies, WMD, and al-Qaida ties originated in the subsequent

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inability of the United States to project a sense of absolute victory in the postbellum occupation, as looting led to terrorist reprisals, an insurgency, and televised beheadings.

It would have been extremely messy to have shot the first 400 looters who began a cascading riot that ruined $13 billion in Iraqi infrastructure. Storming rather than pulling back from Fallujah in April 2004 would have offended the press, the professors, and the Europeans. Arresting or killing Moqtada al-Sadr in June 2003 might have angered the Arab world and invited parlor debate among the mandarins back home, but such measures also would have shown ironclad American resolve and eventually would have impressed even our enemies.

"Amid the glitter of contemporary culture and technology, the will to fight remains crucial to battlefield success."

The key in irregular, as in conventional, war remains the will to win. That's why it was simplistic to suggest in the 2004 campaign that John Kerry was a "flip-flopper," as if he altered positions solely because of changes of heart. In fact, his support for, or criticism of, the war hinged entirely on the pulse of the battlefield. Winning in Iraq made him shed his Howard Dean pacifism; seeing American inability to put down insurgents turned him back into a war critic. And at times, even our war leaders seemed to overlook this simple and depressing facet of human nature: for all their care to hit only terrorists, to supply money and aid, and to work with the Iraqis, they forgot the one requisite for success—the overarching aim to win at all costs.

Victory always sways the heart even of the most ardent pacifist, just as defeat and humiliation erode the will of the most zealous hawk—although it is hard to confess that most humans still think with the most primitive part of their brains. Amid all the glitter of contemporary culture and technology, the will to fight for victory remains crucial to battlefield success, an odious thought for us postmodern children of the Enlightenment, who feel we should be exempt—as too wealthy, educated, or sophisticated—ever to have to descend to the primeval swamp to destroy bin Ladin and his ilk to ensure our survival. But bin Ladin's October infomercial mentioned truces and respites, not out of tender concern for the West, but because bin Ladin is beginning to feel, like al-Sadr, that he is going to lose.

Modern Western man is faced with this awful dilemma, from which he recoils: real peace and successful reconstruction are in direct proportion to the degree that an enemy is humiliatingly defeated and so acknowledges it—the aim being that he will come to feel that he cannot go on being what he has been. To that end, absolute victory may encompass everything from Hiroshima to bombing downtown Belgrade as the price for tranquillity and a democratic and humane postbellum Japan and the Balkans. Not finishing off a defeated Republican Guard in 1991 or sparing looters in April 2003 or breaking off the siege of Fallujah in April 2004 only ensures that more corpses will pile up later. President Bush's so-called Axis of Evil in 2002—Iraq, Iran, and North Korea—all had in common unfinished business with the U.S. military that had led to a *bellum interruptum* of sorts. In contrast, the Grenada communists, Noriega, Milošević, and the Taliban were all defeated, and only after that were their societies rebuilt—and thus Grenada, Panama, Serbia, and Afghanistan now do not belong to the axis of anything. Perhaps for all the debate over how to fight irregular wars in an age of global terrorism, we would do best to recall the realistic, if inelegant, words of the owner of the Oakland Raiders, the infamous Al Davis: "Just win, baby." ※

. . . others can only buy or copy them, as with the cannons used by the sixteenth-century Mughal ruler Akbar to subdue most of India (left).

BULLOCKS DRAGGING SIEGE GUNS UPHILL DURING AKBAR'S ATTACK ON RATHANBHOR FORT IN 1568. ILLUSTRATION FROM THE AKBARNAMA. MUGHAL, 1590/VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON, GREAT BRITAIN/ART RESOURCE, NY

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Why the U.S. Needs More Nuclear Power

It's cheap, clean, safe–and doesn't depend on Arabia.

Peter Huber and Mark P. Mills

Your typical city dweller doesn't know just how much coal and uranium he burns each year. On Lake Shore Drive in Chicago—where the numbers are fairly representative of urban America as a whole—the answer is (roughly): four tons and a few ounces. In round numbers, tons of coal generate about half of the typical city's electric power; ounces of uranium, about 17 percent; natural gas and hydro take care of the rest. New York is a bit different: an apartment dweller on the Upper West Side substitutes two tons of oil (or the equivalent in natural gas) for Chicago's four tons of coal. The oil-tons get burned at plants like the huge oil/gas unit in Astoria, Queens. The uranium ounces get split at Indian Point in Westchester, 35 miles north of the city, as well as at the Ginna, Fitzpatrick, and Nine Mile Point units upstate, and at additional plants in Connecticut, New Jersey, and New Hampshire.

That's the stunning thing about nuclear power: tiny quantities of raw material can do so much. A bundle of enriched-uranium fuel rods that could fit into a two-bedroom apartment in Hell's Kitchen would power the city for a year: furnaces, espresso machines, subways, streetlights, stock tickers, Times Square, everything—even our cars and taxis, if we could conveniently plug them into the grid. True, you don't want to stack fuel rods in midtown Manhattan; you don't in fact want to stack them casually on top of one another anywhere. But in suitable reactors, situated, say, 50 miles from the city on a few hundred acres of suitably fortified and well-guarded real estate, two rooms' worth of fuel could electrify it all.

Think of our solitary New Yorker on the Upper West Side as a 1,400-watt bulb that never sleeps—that's the national per-capita average demand for electric power from homes, factories, businesses, the lot. Our average citizen burns about twice as bright at 4 PM in August, and a lot dimmer at 4 AM in December; grown-ups burn more than kids, the rich more than the poor; but it all averages out: 14 floor lamps per person, lit round the clock. Convert this same number back into a utility's supply-side jargon, and a million people need roughly 1.4 "gigs" of power—1.4 gigawatts (GW). Running at peak power, Entergy's two nuclear units at Indian Point generate just under 2 GW. So just four Indian Points could take care of New York City's 7-GW round-the-clock average. Six could handle its peak load of about 11.5 GW. And if we had all-electric engines, machines, and heaters out at the receiving end, another ten or so could power all the cars, ovens, furnaces—everything else in the city that oil or gas currently fuels.

For such a nuclear-powered future to arrive, however, we'll need to get beyond our nuclear-power past. In the now-standard histories, the beginning of the end of nuclear power arrived on

Two rooms full of uranium can power a city's every electrical need, . . .

GEORGE D. LEPP/CORBIS

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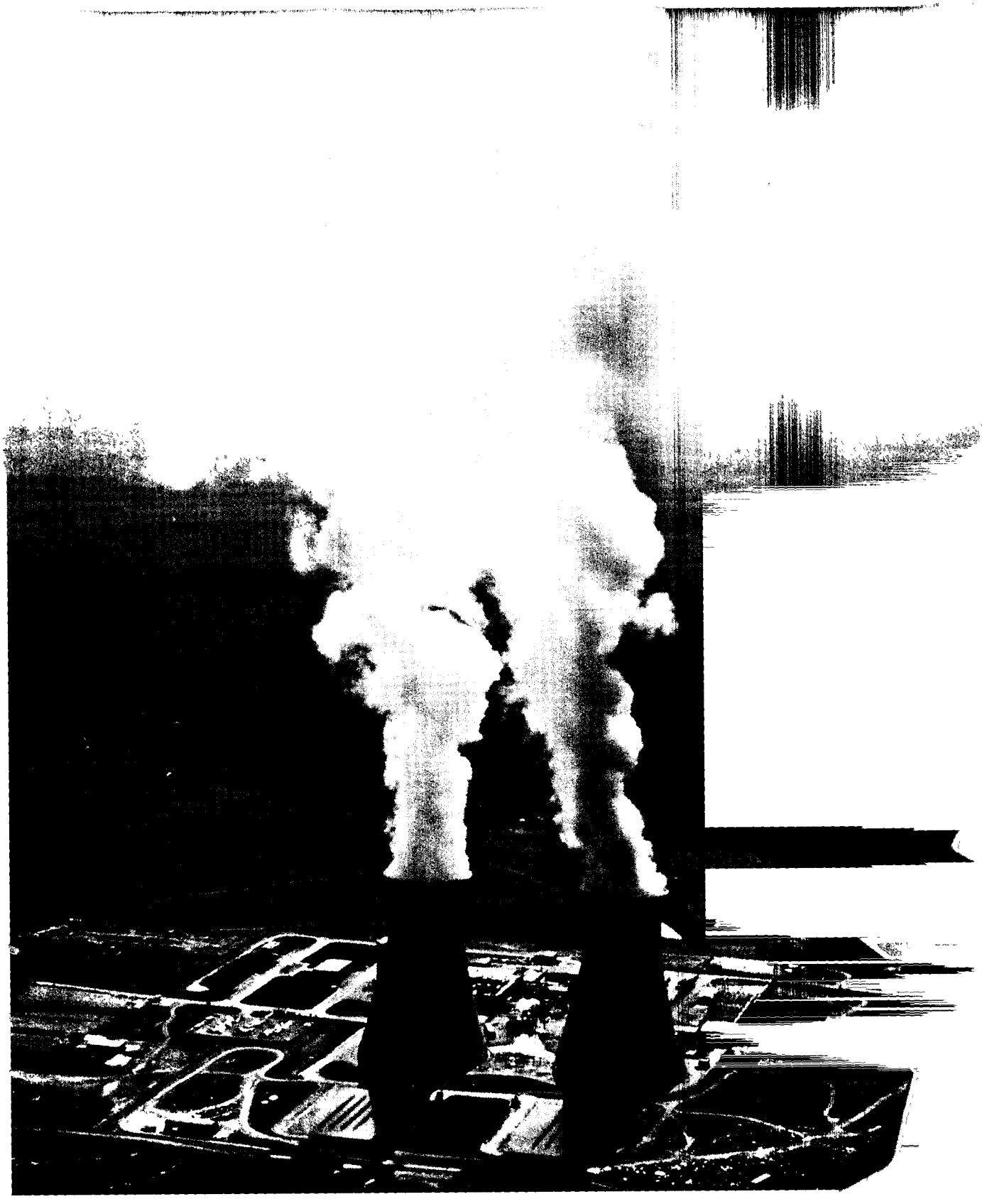

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March 28, 1979, with the meltdown of the uranium core at Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania. The Chernobyl disaster seven years later drove the final nail into the nuclear coffin. It didn't matter that the Three Mile Island containment vessel had done its job and prevented any significant release of radioactivity, or that Soviet reactors operated within a system that couldn't build a safe toaster oven. Uranium was finished.

Three Mile Island came on the heels of the first great energy shock to hit America. On October 19, 1973, King Faisal ordered a 25 percent reduction in Saudi Arabia's oil shipments to the United States, launching the Arab oil embargo. Oil supplies would tighten and prices would rise from then on, experts predicted. It would take some time, but oil was finished, too.

Five months after Three Mile Island, the nation's first energy secretary summed up our predicament: "The energy future is bleak," James R. Schlesinger declared, "and is likely to grow bleaker in the decade ahead. We must rapidly adjust our economics to a condition of chronic stringency in traditional energy supplies." Fortunately, some argued, the U.S. could manage on less—much less. Smaller, more fuel-efficient cars were gaining favor, and rising gas prices would curb demand. The nation certainly didn't need any new giant electric power plants—efficiency and the development of renewable sources of power would suffice. "The long-run supply curve for electricity is as flat as the Kansas horizon," noted one right-thinking energy sage.

In the ensuing decades, however, American oil consumption rose 15 percent and electricity use almost doubled. Many people aren't happy about it. Protecting our oil-supply lines entangles us with feudal theocracies and the fanatical sects that they spawn. The coal that we burn to generate so much of our electricity pollutes the air and may warm the planet. What to do? All sober and thoughtful energy pundits at the *New York Times*, Greenpeace, and the Harvard Divinity School agree: the answer to both problems is . . . efficiency and the development of renewable sources of power. Nevertheless, the secretary of energy, his boss (now a Texas oilman, not a Georgia peanut farmer), and the rest of the country should look elsewhere.

The U.S. today consumes about 100 quads—100 quadrillion BTUs—of raw thermal energy per year. We do three basic things with it: generate electricity (about 40 percent of the raw energy consumed), move vehicles (30 percent), and produce heat (30 percent). Oil is the fuel of transportation, of course. We principally use natural gas to supply raw heat, though it's now making steady inroads into electric power generation. Fueling electric power plants are mainly (in descending order) coal, uranium, natural gas, and rainfall, by way of hydroelectricity.

This sharp segmentation emerged relatively recently, and there's no reason to think it's permanent. After all, developing economies use trees and pasture as fuel for heat and transportation, and don't generate much electricity at all. A century ago, coal was the all-purpose fuel of industrial economies: coal furnaces provided heat, and coal-fired steam engines powered trains, factories, and the early electric power plants. From the 1930s until well into the 1970s, oil fueled not just cars but many electric power plants, too. And by 2020, electricity almost certainly will have become the new cross-cutting "fuel" in both stationary and mobile applications.

That shift is already under way. About 60 percent of the fuel we use today isn't oil but coal, uranium, natural gas, and gravity—all making electricity. Electricity has met almost *all* of the growth in U.S. energy demand since the 1980s. About 60 percent of our GDP now comes from industries and services that use electricity as their front-end "fuel"—in 1950, the figure was only 20 percent. The fastest growth sectors of the economy—information technology and telecom, notably—depend entirely on electricity for fuel, almost none of it oil-generated. Electrically powered information technology accounts for some 60 percent of new capital spending.

Electricity is taking over ever more of the thermal sector, too. A microwave oven displaces much of what a gas stove once did in a kitchen. So, too, lasers, magnetic fields, microwaves, and other forms of high-intensity photon power provide more precise, calibrated heating than do conventional ovens in manufacturing and the industrial processing of materials. These electric cookers (broadly defined) are now replacing conventional

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furnaces, ovens, dryers, and welders to heat air, water, foods, and chemicals, to cure paints and glues, to forge steel, and to weld ships. Over the next two decades, such trends will move another 15 percent or so of our energy economy from conventional thermal to electrically powered processes. And that will shift about 15 percent of our oil-and-gas demand to whatever primary fuels we'll then be using to generate electricity.

Electricity is also taking over the power train in transportation—not the engine itself, but the system that drives power throughout the car. Running in confined tunnels as they do, subways had to be all-electric from the get-go. More recently, diesel-electric locomotives and many of the monster trucks used in mining have made the transition to electric drive trains. Though the oil-fired combustion engine is still there, it's now just an onboard electric generator that propels only electrons.

"As cars get more electric, an infrastructure of battery-recharging stations will grow apace."

Most significantly, the next couple of decades will see us convert to the hybrid gasoline-and-electric car. A steadily rising fraction of the power produced under the hood of a car already is used to generate electricity: electrical modules are replacing components that belts, gears, pulleys, and shafts once drove. Steering, suspension, brakes, fans, pumps, and valves will eventually go electric; in the end, electricity will drive the wheels, too. Gas prices and environmental mandates have little to do with this changeover. The electric drive train simply delivers better performance, lower cost, and less weight.

The policy implications are enormous. Outfitted with a fully electric power train, most of the car—everything but its prime mover—looks like a giant electrical appliance. This appliance won't run any great distance on batteries alone, given today's battery technology. But a substantial battery pack on board will provide surges of power when needed. And that makes possible at least some "refueling" of the car from the electricity grid. As cars get more electric, an infrastructure of battery-recharging stations will grow apace, probably in driveways and parking lots, where most cars spend most of their time.

Once you've got the wheels themselves running on electricity, the basic economics strongly favor getting that electricity from the grid if you can. Burning $2-a-gallon gasoline, the power generated by current hybrid-car engines costs about 35 cents per kilowatt-hour. Many utilities, though, sell off-peak power for much less: 2 to 4 cents per kilowatt-hour. The nationwide residential price is still only 8.5 cents or so. (Peak rates in Manhattan are higher because of the city's heavy dependence on oil and gas, but not enough to change the basic arithmetic.) Grid kilowatts are cheaper because cheaper fuels generate them and because utility power plants run a lot more efficiently than car engines.

The gas tank and combustion engine won't disappear anytime soon, but in the imminent future, grid power will (in effect) begin to top off the tank in between the short trips that account for most driving. All-electric vehicles flopped in the 1990s because batteries can't store sufficient power for long weekend trips. But plug-in hybrids do have a gasoline tank for the long trips. And the vast majority of the most fuel-hungry trips are under six miles—within the range of the 2 to 5 kWh capacity of the onboard nickel-metal-hydride batteries in hybrids already on the road, and easily within the range of emerging automotive-class lithium batteries. Nationally, some 10 percent of hybrid cars could end up running almost entirely on the grid, as they travel less than six miles per day. Stick an extra 90 pounds—$800 worth—of nickel-metal-hydride batteries in a hybrid, recharge in garages and parking lots, and you can shift roughly 25 percent of a typical driver's fuel-hungriest miles to the grid. Urban drivers could go

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long stretches without going near a gas station. The technology for replacing (roughly) one pint of gasoline with one pound of coal or under one ounce of uranium to feed one kilowatt-hour of power to the wheels is now close at hand.

So today we use 40 percent of our fuel to power the plug, and the plug powers 60 percent of GDP. And with the ascent of microwaves, lasers, hybrid wheels, and such, we're moving to 60 and 80 percent, respectively, soon. And then, in due course, 100/100. We're turning to electricity as fuel because it can do more, faster, in much less space—indeed, it's by far the fastest and purest form of power yet tamed for ubiquitous use. Small wonder that demand for it keeps growing.

We've been meeting half of that new demand by burning an extra 400 million tons of coal a year, with coal continuing to supply half of our wired power. Natural gas, the fossil fuel grudgingly favored by most environmentalists, has helped meet the new demand, too: it's back at 16 percent of electricity generated, where it was two decades ago, after dropping sharply for a time. Astonishingly, over this same period, uranium's share of U.S. electricity has also risen—from 11 percent to its current 20 percent. Part of the explanation is more nuclear power plants. Even though Three Mile Island put an end to the commissioning of new facilities, some already under construction at the time later opened, with the plant count peaking at 112 in 1990. Three Mile Island also impelled plant operators to develop systematic procedures for sharing information and expertise, and plants that used to run seven months per year now run almost 11. Uranium has thus displaced about eight percentage points of oil, and five points of hydroelectric, in the expanding electricity market.

Renewable fuels, by contrast, made no visible dent in energy supplies, despite the hopes of Greens and the benefits of government-funded research, subsidies, and tax breaks. About a half billion kWh of electricity came from solar power in 2002—roughly 0.013 percent of the U.S. total. Wind power contributed another 0.27 percent. Fossil and nuclear fuels still completely dominate the U.S. energy supply, as in all industrialized economies.

The other great hope of environmentalists, efficiency, did improve over the last couple of decades—very considerably, in fact. Air conditioners, car engines, industrial machines, lightbulbs, refrigerator motors—without exception, all do much more, with much less, than they used to. Yet in aggregate, they burn more fuel, too. Boosting efficiency actually raises consumption, as counterintuitive as that sounds. The more efficient a car, the cheaper the miles; the more efficient a refrigerator, the cheaper the ice; and at the end of the day, we use more efficient technology so much more that total energy consumption goes up, not down.

MARK E. GIBSON/CORBIS

We're burning our 40 quads of raw fuel to generate about 3.5 trillion kilowatt-hours of electricity per year; if the automotive plug-and-play future does unfold on schedule, we'll need as much as 7 trillion kWh per year by 2025. How should we generate the extra trillions of kilowatt-hours?

With hydrogen, the most optimistic Green visionaries reply—produced by solar cells or windmills. But it's not possible to take such proposals seriously. New York City consumes so much energy that you'd need, at a minimum, to cover two cities with solar cells to power a single city (see "How Cities Green the Planet," Winter 2000). No conceivable mix of solar and wind could come close to supplying the trillions of additional kilowatt-hours of power we'll soon need.

Nuclear power could do it—easily. In all key technical respects, it is the antithesis of solar power. A quad's worth of solar-powered wood is a huge forest—beautiful to behold, but bulky and heavy. Pound for pound, coal stores about twice as much heat. Oil beats coal by about twice as much again. And an ounce of enriched-uranium fuel equals about four tons of coal, or 15 barrels of oil. That's why minuscule quantities contained in relatively tiny reactors can power a metropolis.

What's more, North America has vast deposits of uranium ore, and scooping it up is no real challenge. Enrichment accounts for about half of the fuel's cost, and enrichment technologies keep

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. . . from trading rooms to streetlights to MRI machines.

improving. Proponents of solar and wind power maintain—correctly—that the underlying technologies for these energy sources keep getting cheaper, but so do those that squeeze power out of conventional fuels. The lasers coming out of the same semiconductor fabs that build solar cells could enrich uranium a thousand times more efficiently than the gaseous-diffusion processes currently used.

And we also know this: left to its own devices, the market has not pursued thin, low-energy-density fuels, however cheap, but has instead paid steep premiums for fuels that pack more energy into less weight and space, and for power plants that pump greater power out of smaller engines, furnaces, generators, reactors, and turbines. Until the 1970s, engineering and economic imperatives had been pushing the fuel mix inexorably up the power-density curve, from wood to coal to oil to uranium. And the same held true on the demand side, with consumers steadily shifting toward fuels carrying more power, delivered faster, in less space.

Then King Faisal and Three Mile Island shattered our confidence and convinced regulators, secretaries of energy, and even a president that just about everything that the economists and engineers thought they knew about energy was wrong. So wrong that we had to reverse completely the extraordinarily successful power policies of the past.

New York has certainly felt the effects of that reversal. In 1965, the Long Island Lighting Company (LILCO) announced plans to build a $75 million nuclear plant in Suffolk County, to come on line by 1973; soon after, it purchased a 455-acre site between Shoreham and Wading River. A bit later, LILCO decided to increase Shoreham's size and said it wanted to build several other nuclear plants in the area. Public resistance and federal regulators delayed Shoreham's completion. Then Three Mile Island happened. In the aftermath, regulators required plant operators to devise evacuation plans in coordination with state and local governments. In early 1983, newly elected governor Mario Cuomo and the Suffolk County legislature both declared that no evacuation plan would ever be feasible and safe. That was that. By the time the state fully decommissioned Shoreham in 1994, its price tag had

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reached $6 billion—and the plant had never started full-power commercial operation. To pay for it all, Long Island electric rates skyrocketed.

What scared many New Yorkers—and thus many politicians—away from nuclear power was what had originally attracted the engineers and the utility economists to it: nuclear facilities use a unique fuel, burned, in its fashion, in relatively tiny reactors, to generate gargantuan amounts of power. Do it all just right, end to end, and you get cheap, abundant power, and King Faisal can't do a thing about it. But the raw material itself, packing so much power into so little material, is inherently dangerous. Sufficiently bad engineering can result in a Three Mile Island or a Chernobyl. And these days, there's the fear that poor security might enable terrorists to pull off something even worse.

How worried should we really be in 2005 that accidents or attacks might release and disperse a nuclear power plant's radioactive fuel? Not very. Our civilian nuclear industry has dramatically improved its procedures and safety-related hardware since 1979. Several thousand reactor-years of statistics since Three Mile Island clearly show that these power plants are extraordinarily reliable in normal operation.

And uranium's combination of power and super-density makes the fuel less of a terror risk, not more, at least from an engineering standpoint. It's easy to "overbuild" the protective walls and containment systems of nuclear facilities, since—like the pyramids—the payload they're built to shield is so small. Protecting skyscrapers is hard; no builder can afford to erect a hundred times more wall than usable space. Guaranteeing the integrity of a jumbo jet's fuel tanks is impossible; the tanks have to fly. Shielding a nuclear plant's tiny payload is easy—just erect more steel, pour more concrete, and build tougher perimeters.

In fact, it's a safety challenge that we have already met. Today's plants split atoms behind super-thick layers of steel and concrete; future plants would boast thicker protection still. All the numbers, and the strong consensus in the technical community, reinforce the projections made two decades ago: it is extremely unlikely that there will ever be a serious release of nuclear materials from a U.S. reactor.

What about the economic cost of nuclear power? Wind and sun are free, of course. But if the cost of fuel were all that mattered, the day of too-cheap-to-meter nuclear power would now be here—nearer, certainly, than too-cheap-to-meter solar power. Raw fuel accounts for over half the delivered cost of electricity generated in gas-fired turbines, about one-third of coal-fired power, and just a tenth of nuclear electricity. Factor in the cost of capital equipment, and the cheapest electrons come from uranium and coal, not sun and wind. What we pay for at our electric meter is increasingly like what we pay for at fancy restaurants: not the raw calories, but the fine linen, the service, and the chef's ineffable artistry. In our overall energy accounts, the sophisticated power-conversion hardware matters more every year, and the cost of raw fuel matters less.

This in itself is great news for America. We're good at large-scale hardware; we build it ourselves and keep building it cheaper. The average price of U.S. electricity fell throughout the twentieth century, and it has kept falling since, except in egregiously mismanaged markets such as California's.

The cheap, plentiful power does terrific things for labor productivity and overall employment. As Lewis E. Lehrman notes, rising employment strongly correlates with rising supplies of low-cost energy. It takes energy to get the increasingly mobile worker to the increasingly distant workplace, and energy to process materials and power the increasingly advanced machines that shape and assemble those materials.

Most of the world, Europe aside, now recognizes this point. Workers in Asia and India are swiftly gaining access to the powered machines that steadily boosted the productivity of the American factory worker throughout the twentieth century. And the electricity driving those machines comes from power plants designed—and often built—by U.S. vendors. The power is a lot less expensive than ours, though, since it is generated the old-fashioned forget-the-environment way. There is little bother about pro-

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tecting the river or scrubbing the smoke. China's answer to the 2-gigawatt Hoover Dam on the Colorado River is the Three Gorges project, an 18-gigawatt dam on the Yangtze River. Combine cheaper supplies of energy with ready access to heavy industrial machines, and it's hard to see how foreign laborers cannot close the productivity gap that has historically enabled American workers to remain competitive at considerably higher wages. Unless, that is, the United States keeps on pushing the productivity of its own workforce out ahead of its competitors. That—inevitably—means expanding our power supply and keeping it affordable, and deploying even more advanced technologies of powered production. Nuclear power would help keep the twenty-first-century U.S. economy globally competitive.

"Uranium's combination of power and super-density makes the fuel less of a terror risk, not more."

Greens don't want to hear it, but nuclear power makes the most environmental sense, too. Nuclear wastes pose no serious engineering problems. Uranium is such an energy-rich fuel that the actual volume of waste is tiny compared with that of other fuels, and is easily converted from its already-stable ceramic form as a fuel into an even more stable glass-like compound, and just as easily deposited in deep geological formations, themselves stable for tens of millions of years. And what has Green antinuclear activism achieved since the seventies? Not the reduction in demand for energy that it had hoped for but a massive increase in the use of coal, which burns less clean than uranium.

Many Greens think that they have a good grip on the likely trajectory of the planet's climate over the next 100 years. If we keep burning fossil fuels at current rates, their climate models tell them, we'll face a meltdown on a much larger scale than Chernobyl's, beginning with the polar ice caps. Saving an extra 400 million tons of coal here and there—roughly the amount of carbon that the United States would have to stop burning to comply with the Kyoto Protocol today—would make quite a difference, we're told.

But serious Greens must face reality. Short of some convulsion that drastically shrinks the economy, demand for electricity will go on rising. Total U.S. electricity consumption will increase another 20 to 30 percent, at least, over the next ten years. Neither Democrats nor Republicans, moreover, will let the grid go cold—not even if that means burning yet another 400 million more tons of coal. Not even if that means melting the ice caps and putting much of Bangladesh under water. No governor or president wants to be the next Gray Davis, recalled from office when the lights go out.

The power has to come from somewhere. Sun and wind will never come close to supplying it. Earnest though they are, the people who argue otherwise are the folks who brought us 400 million extra tons of coal a year. The one practical technology that could decisively shift U.S. carbon emissions in the near term would displace coal with uranium, since uranium burns emission-free. It's time even for Greens to embrace the atom.

It must surely be clear by now, too, that the political costs of depending so heavily on oil from the Middle East are just too great. We need to find a way to stop funneling $25 billion a year (or so) of our energy dollars into churning cauldrons of hate and violence. By sharply curtailing our dependence on Middle Eastern oil, we would greatly expand the range of feasible political and military options in dealing with the countries that breed the terrorists.

The best thing we can do to decrease the Middle East's hold on us is to turn off the spigot ourselves. For economic, ecological, and geopolitical reasons, U.S. policymakers ought to promote electrification on the demand side, and nuclear fuel on the supply side, wherever they reasonably can.

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Capitalists on Steroids

Though exaggerated, shows like *The Apprentice* reflect America's can-do response to globalism's competitive challenge.

Kay S. Hymowitz

"You're fired!" may be the money phrase on the Donald Trump reality series *The Apprentice*, but it's not the show's key locution. That honor goes to the word "tough." "They're tough," the Donald says, nodding toward two Barbie-blondes among the five remaining twenty- and thirtysomethings competing to win a job running one of Trump's businesses. "Assume your opponent is the toughest, smartest person in the world," he advises later. Above all, "tough" is the word for the setting of the series. "New York is the toughest place on earth," America's favorite billionaire warns. Week after week, the players learn just "how tough the city is." And Trump delivers innumerable variations on the theme: "It's the meanest city in the world, it's the most vicious city in the world! . . . This jungle of Manhattan is the real jungle; you have to fight for a cup of coffee here, for God's sake."

The jungle Trump is referring to has nothing to do with the Starbucks at 45th and Fifth. Nor, at a time where the city's murder rate is lower than that of Dallas, does it allude to the mean streets we all know from creations like *Taxi Driver* and *NYPD Blue*. No, Trump is talking about the New York jungle that winds its way from Wall Street to the haunts of publishers and editors around the Flatiron district, up through the garment district, around the offices of big midtown law firms and real-estate developers, across Madison Avenue, and into the deal-making home offices of unassuming lofts and walkups all around the city. It is the jungle that is the capital of the global economy, where people, particularly young people like the contestants on *The Apprentice*, come to compete for their rightful place. The struggle takes resilience; it takes toughness. But it's not all blood, sweat, and tears. "If you're not careful, [New York] will chew you up and spit you out, but if you work hard you can hit it big," Trump declares. "And I mean really big."

The Apprentice, like its bankruptcy-prone, cartoon-tycoon star, may tend toward blustery showmanship, but the tough talk is not just entertainment. After 9/11, a dot-com bust, a recession, corporate scandals, an increasingly competitive economy, and a recovery whose conflicting signs sometimes seem as mysterious as chai tea leaves, the popularity of the show reflects a subtle change in the zeitgeist. In the go-go nineties, ecstatic capitalists played volleyball in their cool, dot-com offices and carried on about "soulful" companies and workers. The mood among aspirants in the current global economy has become a lot more sober. This economy requires serious competitors, men and women who are focused, determined, entrepreneur-athletes; they're capitalists on steroids.

You see signs of the new mood in the imagery pervading many of the TV reality shows, in the language of self-help books and programs; you see it in the nation's gyms and yoga studios, on Little League fields and in high-stakes-testing classrooms. Americans know that making their way in today's economy is a muscle-flexing,

Illustrations by Arnold Roth

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sweat-inducing struggle, and they know that they have to raise their children to understand this as well. It's not all misery by any means—there's more than a hint of adventure, excitement, and fulfillment in the contemporary economy. But, well, it's tough.

Of course, the idea that the American business world is a jungle is hardly new. Gilded Age pundits unapologetically described life under capitalism as a Darwinian struggle that would sort out the weak from the strong and bring progress to social life. Decades later, Ayn Rand glamorized the image of the entrepreneur as a kind of lone *Übermensch* whose natural talents would elevate him above the pack. In the 1980s, the decade when the Gilded Age robber barons came back to life as the Reagan-era Masters of the Universe, the image of capitalism as a dog-eat-dog jungle returned with a vengeance. "It's trench warfare out there, pal," Gordon Gekko says to his apprentice Bud Fox (note the aptly Darwinian names) in the 1987 Oliver Stone movie *Wall Street*. Gekko snarls quotations from Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, a text that, along with volumes delineating leadership secrets from Machiavelli, General Patton, Ulysses S. Grant, and even Attila the Hun, was becoming popular at the time for its putative insights into the world of business.

But those days are to today's economy what a warm-up act is to the main show, or, perhaps more fittingly, what Roger Maris is to Barry Bonds. As *Fortune* columnist Stanley Bing puts it in the you-ain't-seen-nothing title of his latest best seller, *Sun Tzu Was a Sissy: Conquer Your Enemies, Promote Your Friends, and Wage the Real Art of War*. (Bing, by the way, is also the author of the 2000 *What Would Machiavelli Do?: The Ends Justify the Meanness*.) Facing global competition, global opportunity, and an Internet economy that Proxicom founder Raul Fernandez once described as "Darwinism on steroids," everyone from the lowly sales executive to the top brass has to be in top form. All have to be capable of 24/7 concentration—able not just to endure change but to seize opportunity in what Joseph Schumpeter famously called "creative destruction."

More than the citizens of any First World nation, Americans have charged wholeheartedly into the global economy—and have become familiar with both creation and destruction. With a smaller government and fewer regulations than most advanced economies, American companies have been able to downsize, reengineer, and restructure, and they keep doing so at a dizzying pace. The reason Trump's "You're fired!" resonates so powerfully is that it captures an essential truth: Americans hear those words far more often than workers in other capitalist economies.

Americans also work more hours. In France, a best seller called *Bonjour Paresse* (*Hello Laziness*) recommends sloth as a virtue; its subtitle in English would be *The Art and Importance of Doing the Least Possible in the Workplace*. No way would such a book find a following on this side of the pond. Americans know that they have to work harder and plan big, to be perpetually scanning the horizon for the Next Big Thing or watching out for the competitors nipping at their heels. ("Only the paranoid survive," Intel CEO Andy Grove wryly observed.) Critics of America's brand of economics, particularly Western Europeans, sneer at its "cowboy capitalism." Though they understate the benefits and overstate the ill effects of our low-regulation, low-tax, high-turnover, perpetually innovating system, there is nevertheless a grain of truth to the image. The Wild West? No. But harsh and full of risks? Yes.

Just consider the changing profile of the corporate CEO. According to an analysis of Fortune 700 CEOs by *Chief Executive*, today's boss is less likely to resemble the steadfast company man of bygone years than an independent agent grittily pursuing his own ambitions to whichever corner office they take him. In 1980, the average Fortune 100 CEO spent 26 years with one company. Today's Fortune 700 CEO hangs around for barely 16. A full 20 percent of all Fortune 700 CEOs have been in their current positions for only one year or less. Today's CEO is also likely to be younger than his earlier counterpart. In 1980 more than half of Fortune 100

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chief execs were in their sixties; today, barely a quarter are. Why? "More and more CEOs believe that the increasingly rigorous demands on the time and performance of a CEO require the stamina of a younger person," the article explains. "The job's a lot tougher now [there's that word again]. Today top executives are expected to be on call 24/7. That's in addition to the normal pressures of dealing with shareholders, visiting customers, and maintaining an often brutal travel schedule."

Mindful of the long hours and stressful demands of the global economy, ambitious Americans go into training with all of the self-discipline of professional athletes. A *USA Today* profile of Stephen Covey, the mega-successful author of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, describes his strenuous routine: "Even when [the 72-year-old] Covey gets off a plane and arrives home at 11 p.m., he'll spend 90 minutes in his home gym where he swims with fins on both hands and feet, bikes and does yoga and Pilates." He jokes about his baldness: "While you guys are blow-drying, I'm working." *Fortune* reports that adrenalized executives bored with your run-of-the-mill, ho-hum 26-mile marathon are taking up "ultra-marathoning." They might try the Marathon des Sables, a sprint across the Sahara in 120-degree heat, or the Gobi March, six marathons in seven days across the Gobi desert.

In their business-class Airbus seats, perhaps they will be reading books like *The Leadership Lessons of the U.S. Navy SEALs*; *The Ultimate Guide to Mental Toughness*; *Discipline: Training the Mind to Manage Your Life*; or *Unleash the Warrior Within: Develop the Focus, Discipline, Confidence, Courage You Need to Achieve Unlimited Goals*. And in the airline magazine, they might flip past a glossy photo of a group of square-jawed, brawny-shouldered models (no soulful types like *The Pianist* star Adrien Brody need apply) advertising a new men's clothing line from Donald Trump, which is designed "to make a strong first impression"—with, one surmises, an emphasis on strong.

"Critics of America's brand of economics, particularly Western Europeans, sneer at its 'cowboy capitalism.'"

The capitalist on steroids, facing an environment where innovation and change are the only constants, has to be courageous as well as fit. "Take risks. Take chances. You gotta go into life brave," as the singer Billy Joel advises some of *The Apprentice* contestants during one episode this season. In 2003, Quantum Fund founder Jim Rogers published a book about his record-setting motorcycle trip around the world, cleverly titled *Adventure Capitalist*. As a businessman, Rogers may be a highflier—*Time* once described him as "the Indiana Jones of finance"—but his travels hardly put him in the top ranks of adventurer businessmen. CNET news.com describes Bill Rancic, who, as the winner of the first season of *The Apprentice*, is now overseeing construction of a 90-story Trump building in Chicago, as "an adventure junkie. When he is not making business deals, he enjoys skydiving and scuba diving." (A *Chicago Tribune* profile of Rancic rounds out the picture of a lean and mean striver: it mentions the copy of Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead* next to his bed and lists the contents of his Sub-Zero refrigerator—Gatorade, milk, beer, and a couple of PowerBars.)

According to *BusinessWeek*, men at the top of the heap are giving up golf for sports that get their testosterone rushing, like heli-skiing and surfing. "Extreme-sports participants are often managers, executives, owners of companies," a Hartford Life manager who insures people with risky hobbies explains. "They've got an air of invulnerability." Another popular entertainment for the daredevil CEO, says *Chief Executive*, is "Steep and Deep Ski Camp," which offers four days of training with Olympian Tommy Moe off the beaten path of the Jackson Hole ski area. Other CEOs, like Amazon's Jeff Bezos, Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen, and Anousheh Ansari,

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founder of TeleCom, would no doubt scoff at heli-skiing as leisure time for wusses. Each has his eye on an even more Olympian sport: space travel.

Intensifying the Right Stuff atmosphere is a new cohort of worker-athletes, born after 1970 and now moving into management positions, whom management consultants sometimes call the "gamer generation"—but they don't mean that these folks fool around. Growing up in the post-Nintendo era, they are tenacious competitors, and having witnessed the tech revolution at an impressionable age, they are ready to assume that anything is possible. "They're way more competitive and are very passionate about 'winning,'" explain John C. Beck and Mitchell Wade, authors of *Got Game: How the Gamer Generation Is Reshaping Business Forever*. "They're both more optimistic and more determined about solving any kind of problem you can imagine."

Gamers are also a no-pain, no-gain crowd; they take it for granted that you have to suffer to win. A recent *Fortune* article describes the dilemma of Tylenol's manufacturer as it set out to advertise to 18- to 34-year-olds. The company found that this demographic wasn't particularly interested in painkillers, since they "think pain is cool." Trend guru Faith Popcorn agrees: "They wear [pain] as a badge." For similar reasons, Gillette introduced its Right Guard Xtreme Sport deodorant line to lure younger customers; it promises that the product will "keep performing even as [consumers] push their limits"—although the company will have to try harder if it is to catch up to the Number One deodorant among the young: Old Spice's High Endurance.

The Rebel Billionaire, a Fox reality series introduced this past fall, perfectly—if bizarrely—reflects the theme of courageous risk-taking in an age of steroid capitalism. The show stars Sir Richard Branson, the youthful-looking and mischievous CEO of Britain's Virgin Atlantic Airways, which, not coincidentally, is looking to expand its market in the United States. Like Trump's, Branson's show auditions young men and women for a big-time job by having them take on a series of challenges. But while Trump is an *ur*–New Yorker and his show makes a fetish of the Big Apple, Branson is a man about the globe. As he told the *New York Times Magazine*'s Deborah Solomon, "I never spend any time in an office." He takes his contestants into "10 countries, 5 continents, the world." The hyperactive series has had episodes in Hong Kong, South Africa, the south of France, London, and Morocco.

More to the point, while Trump tests his apprentices through corporate sales projects, Branson also has them do Indiana Jones–style stunts. He's barely exaggerating when he says that his contestants "go through hell"; they walk a narrow plank between two hot-air balloons 10,000 feet in the air and jump off a cliff into the arms of a teammate suspended in mid-air by a gigantic hook. And the mood extends to commercials as well: during the first week of the series, there was an American Express ad with a burly man boasting, "My life takes me to the edge. My card always goes with me," as well as spots for he-man vehicles like Jeep Cherokee, Hummer, and the lesser-known Toyota Tacoma, which claims "off-road toughness." For Branson, a swashbuckling adventure capitalist who has crossed the Atlantic and the Pacific by hot-air balloon, the tasks he assigns his contestants will help him determine "how [people] perform under pressure." "I've challenged myself physically," he explains. "I've challenged myself entrepreneurially."

Branson's explanation for all this risky business puts the popularity of some of the contest reality shows in a distinct light. Almost every night, millions of Americans watch shows about real people testing the limits of their physical strength and bravery as a kind of metaphor for their life in a tough, unpredictable, risk-filled economy. On *The Amazing Race*, contestants have gone bungee jumping in New Zealand, kayaking over waterfalls, and crawling through ancient temples filled with rats. On the sophomoric *Fear Factor*, players push their limits by eating worms and beetles, letting rats crawl over them, or rappelling off 12-story buildings. The most popular reality contest, and still among the most-watched shows on television, is *Survivor*, where contestants go to exotic locations to test their mettle; the last one standing wins a million dollars. Mark Burnett, *Survivor*'s creator, has also authored a memoir

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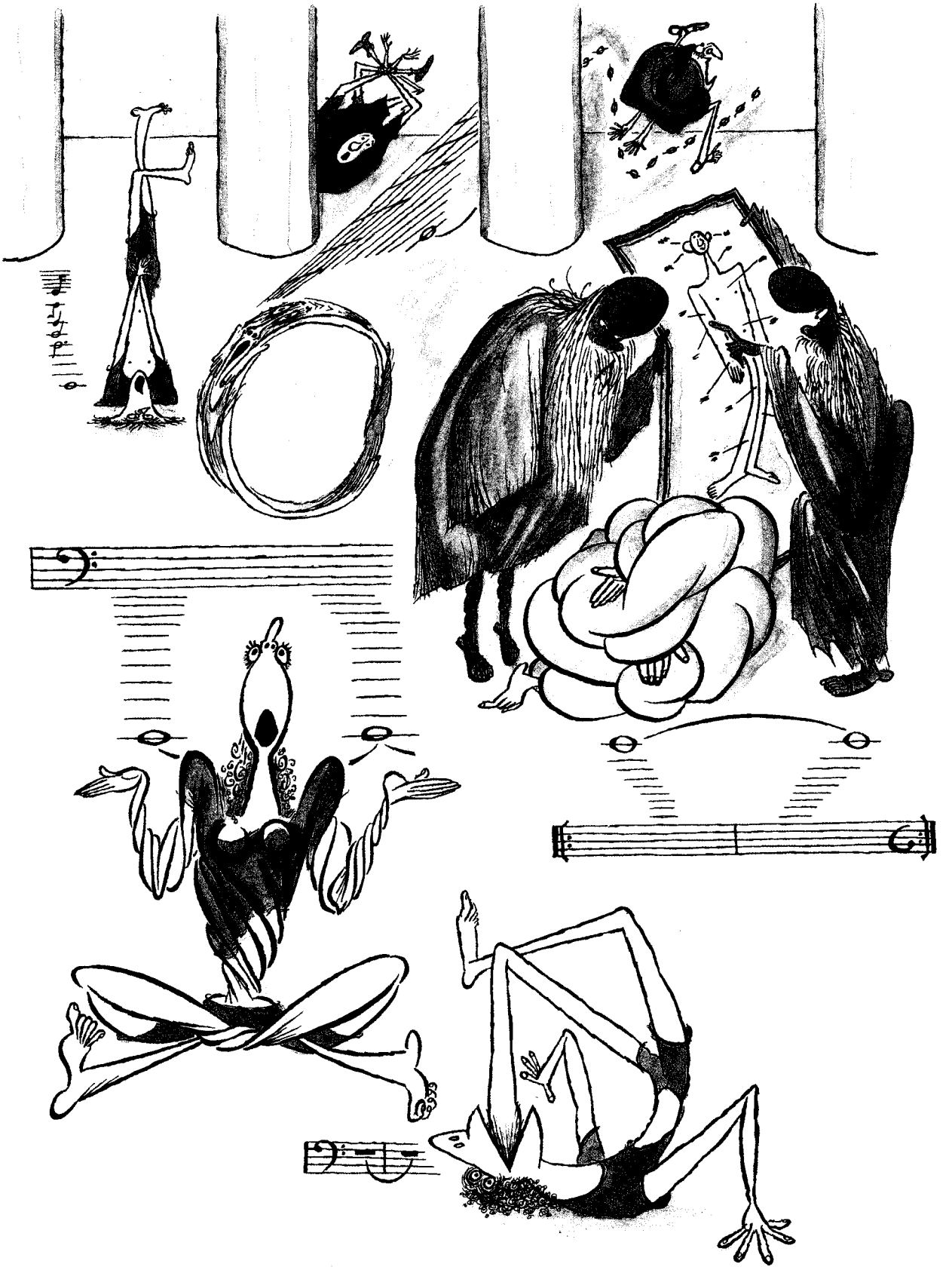

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called *Dare to Succeed*, which bristles with quotations from Sir Edmund Hillary and other explorers. Several years ago, Burnett made a deal with Fox to develop a reality contest to outperform them all. It was to be called *Destination Mir*, and its goal was to take contestants from space camp to orbit. Unfortunately, the Mir space station crashed—taking *Destination Mir* down with it.

Burnett is also the brains behind *The Apprentice*, which makes perfect sense when you realize that the Trump show is simply *Survivor* for the global-economy meritocrat. "You're all really talented people, but only one of you will end up running one of my companies," Trump warns his "brilliant" contestants. *The Apprentice* calls on its players to show their true grit in "a billionaire's boot camp," as James Traub called the contest in a profile of the mogul in the *New York Times Magazine*. "This is thirteen weeks of hell," Trump warns his contestants. No wonder a West Pointer was the second season's winner.

While the show doesn't do Outward Bound tasks like those in *Rebel Billionaire* or *Survivor*, and its surroundings are more likely to be polished marble and brass than the wild, it's not without a whiff of the Darwinian jungle. The Donald himself sports a luxuriant mane of reddish hair that seems to spring not just out of his pate but also out of his brow, where it almost merges with his wildly profuse eyebrows. His hirsute look has sparked a lot of comment in the press—the website *Gothamist.com* refers to "the strange power that is The Donald's hair"—but the star knows what he is about. Fittingly, given his widely reported financial difficulties, Trump is casting himself as a made-for-TV billionaire. His appearance is meant to evoke the alpha lion, especially when he sets his mouth in an exaggerated snarl that suggests he has been studying *National Geographic* photos of the African savanna. Sometimes after uttering his trademark metaphorical roar—"You're fired!"—and once his victims have left the room, he turns to his aides and says, "Whew! That was tough!" They reassure him with, "You did the right thing!" or "It was a no-brainer!" as if they were the handlers patting down a wounded boxer between rounds.

Still, let's not forget the thing that makes *The Apprentice* the toughest contest of all, in spite of its luxurious surroundings. In most game shows, the prize is a trip to Hawaii, a million dollars, or a new television. No such easy pleasure awaits the strivers who win *The Apprentice*. No, their prize is: working for a year.

Progressive-minded critics have noticed the Darwinian spirit of reality shows like *The Apprentice*, and they are not amused. The *Washington Post* called the show "sadistic," while in *Harpers* Francine Prose argued that reality TV is Republican "agitprop" in which "morality is a luxury," "civility is, at best, a frill," and "the laws of natural selection are even more brutal, inflexible, and sensible than one might suppose from reading *Origin of the Species*." The shows "remind us that the workplace is the last realm in American society where sadism is sanctioned," observed Deborah Solomon in her *New York Times Magazine* interview with Sir Richard Branson.

These critics might want to hit the rewind button. For all its competitive juices, *The Apprentice*, at any rate, is a reminder that, though the economy may be ruthless, a performance-enhanced capitalist cannot afford to be a brute. True, the contest to become Trump's apprentice inspires a lot of strategizing and backbiting. And certainly the show has its heartless moments. In one of the most embarrassing episodes in the first season, a contestant named Sam pleaded with the Donald just as he was about to utter the dreaded words: "Don't say it, Mr. Trump! Please don't say it!" When Trump does say, "You're fired!" the scene is so overwrought that we almost expect to see the whimpering contestant dragged out of the boardroom by Tony Soprano's goons.

Yet one of the central messages of *The Apprentice* is precisely the opposite of what the show's critics have argued: toughness doesn't excuse incivility, nor is steroidal capitalism for the uncouth. Any lout can swim 60 laps, jump out of airplanes, and shout down an opponent, but only the truly superior competitor can apply the same self-discipline he brings to his physical exertions to controlling his emotions and molding his personality. Trump, whose gilded excesses

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once earned him the sobriquet of the "short-fingered vulgarian," makes an unlikely teacher of self-discipline. Nevertheless, he plays the wise mentor for the young, lone, battle-ready global contender who also needs to learn the etiquette of a team-playing, corporate sophisticate. "You should never lose your cool unless it's an act," Trump warns. Contestants who are quick to anger, who wear their will to power on their sleeves, who don't listen, who speak rudely, or who are just plain obnoxious get the pink slip no matter how cutthroat they are. The two finalists of the first season, Bill Rancic and Kwami Jackson, were both mild-mannered men; and in the boardroom the Donald himself is surprisingly down-to-earth and soft-spoken. If he doesn't actually like most of his apprentices, then he's a better actor than most prime-time stars. For all his egotistical mugging to the camera, Trump also teaches that courtesy, not just steely resolve, is part of the art of the deal.

"Though the economy may be ruthless, a performance-enhanced capitalist cannot afford to be a brute."

At first glance, it may seem surprising that the gentler sex has the harder time learning these lessons, but it shouldn't be. Women are in a tricky position in the world of steroid capitalism. They may have an edge when it comes to manners, or what human-resources managers call "people skills." But unlike men, who have had to keep their combative instincts in check since they were little boys, women have trouble combining aggression with the courtesy owed an opponent. *The Apprentice*'s women, especially in the second season, give the impression that they've been shipped over from the set of *Mean Girls*. When they lose, the men shake hands, but the women gossip, bicker, cry, and roll their eyes. There's a big market these days for books with titles like *The Princessa: Machiavelli for Women; Why Good Girls Don't Get Ahead, But Gutsy Girls Do; Play Like a Man, Win Like a Woman*; and *Nice Girls Don't Get the Corner Office*. But if *The Apprentice* is telling it like it is, ambitious young women would be better off spending their spare time reading Miss Manners.

Adding to the women's problems is their confusion over the role of sex in the testosterone-suffused workplace. The women of *The Apprentice* are almost without exception what men in their less professional moments would call babes, and they know it. Having come of age in the *Sex and the City* era, they are about as subtle as Heidi Fleiss in the way they use sex to further their ambitions. Their idea of career-wear is blouses with Dolly Parton cleavage and rocker miniskirts. In the early weeks of the first season, the women beat the men in a lemonade-selling contest partly by kissing male customers and offering them their phone numbers. Later on, they build their ad campaign for a private jet company with suggestive pictures of the bulging underside of the plane and the text "How do you measure up? How do you fit in?" During the second season, in a desperate "gimmick" designed to goose up her team's flagging candy-bar sales, a promising contestant named Ivana offers to drop her skirt as a bonus for men willing to shell out $20 for the candy. Trump—with his aide-de-camp Carolyn Kepcher, whose Red-state wardrobe and reserved manner serve as an implicit critique of the younger, tacky female apprentices—chastises the women. And when he fires Ivana the skirt-dropper, it is less the dictate of a bully boss than a cautionary lesson for a generation of women-who-would-be-CEO who need to learn the difference between Martha Stewart and Paris Hilton.

That women are having trouble coping with the pressures of steroidal capitalism is also clear from the way stress relief for the second sex has become a big business in its own right. A wide range of New Agey products and services promise relaxation, while also attending to the global competitor's need for self-control and focus. New York–based Cloud Nine Reflexology, for instance,

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offers an ancient form of foot massage that "reduces stress, improves circulation . . . and may even boost productivity." A catalog called "Alter Your Life: Solutions for Work-Life Balance" sells "serenity rings" and traveling coffee mugs inscribed "There Is More to Life than Increasing Its Speed" or "Power." The most popular stress-relief technique is yoga, the quintessential leisure activity in an age of steroid capitalism. Yoga relaxes, yes, but it also energizes and teaches concentration and discipline. The website iVillage, targeting women, offers "15 minute stress buster" programs, "so you can have a yoga class right at your desk." There's one for "when pressure builds and you need to de-stress" and another for when "you need to refuel and recharge."

Yet capitalists on steroids—both women and men—can't escape the demands of today's economy anywhere, not even in the nursery or family room. Ambitious parents feel that they have to start training their children at an early age to become winning competitors in the global economy. And just as they value physical self-discipline for themselves, they value it for their kids, too. They take them to 5 AM hockey practice and far-off swim meets. In Santa Cruz, California, they might enroll their kids in the "Superkid Triathlon," which includes divisions for triathletes as young as three. Many communities have hired professional soccer coaches rather than parent volunteers to give their kids a more competitive workout.

The kid soccer business has gotten so intense—and some parents have become so aggressive, yelling instructions and fighting with coaches and parents of kids on the opposing team—that soccer organizations have introduced "Silent Saturdays." During silent games, parents are forbidden to tell little Sammy to take his finger out of his nose and go after the goddamn ball and are reduced to watching passively, something uncongenial to steroidal capitalists. In an article on silent games, *The New York Times* reports that some parents, especially those who are lawyers, speak darkly about censorship and First Amendment rights. One Florida coach got an e-mail from a mother who sneered about silent games, which make even cheering a child who has made a goal *verboten*: "In the real world—maybe not in your politically correct world, but in the real business world where most of these children go—they will have to deal with others getting stars and them not. Get a grip." Curious about the identity of the child in question, the coach looked up the family's application. The player was six years old.

The anxiety to prepare children for "the real business world" explains the widely discussed, though misunderstood, phenomenon of the "overscheduled child"—he is simply the youth version of the capitalist on steroids. Middle-class kids today need a Palm Pilot to keep track of all of their violin lessons, skating competitions, church classes, and soccer meets. A recent Public Agenda report entitled "All Work and No Play?" discovered that 57 percent of middle and high school kids say that they are in an out-of-school activity or program either every day or almost every day. And 79 percent say that they are in such activities both on school days and on weekends.

The parents of these children are doing exactly what parents are supposed to do: preparing their kids to meet the demands of their society. Today that means developing a ferocious work ethic, self-discipline, competitive zeal, and flexibility. An outfit called Yoga for Kids knows just how to appeal to today's parent; the company promises yoga will "increase their [kids'] attention span and focus. . . . And everyone knows how important it is to be able to focus for schoolwork or sports or playing a musical instrument." With or without yoga, the middle-class child's loaded schedule not only gives him a better shot at getting into Princeton or Harvard Business School; it also fine-tunes his character for peak performance in a competitive global economy.

There's a lot to be said for that character. America's cowboy capitalism asks its worker-citizens to be hardworking, self-motivated, innovative, and, surprising as it may strike its critics, civil. It's a system that has enlarged its participants' sense of opportunity. Sure, only two or three kids per generation can grow up to be president, but anyone with discipline, ambition, and a sense of adventure can aspire to be an entrepreneur.

But you know what? It's also tough. ◻

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The Real Engine of Blue America

There are no Blue states—only Blue cities, where tax eaters rule.

Steven Malanga

Is it really true that America is politically divided between conservative "Red" states in the southern and middle sections of the country and liberal "Blue" states on both coasts? Not exactly: a close look at the district-by-district voting patterns of the coastal states in the 2004 elections brings into crystal-clear focus the real nature of our political divisions. There's really no such thing as a Blue state—only Blue metropolitan regions. Indeed, the electoral maps of some states that went for John Kerry in 2004 consist mostly of Red suburban and rural counties surrounding deep Blue cities.

What makes these cities so Blue is a multifaceted liberal coalition that ranges from old-style industrial unionists and culturally liberal intellectuals, journalists, and entertainers to tort lawyers, feminists, and even politically correct financiers. But within this coalition, one group stands out as increasingly powerful and not quite in step with the old politics of the Left: those who benefit from an expanding government, including public-sector employees, workers at organizations that survive off government money, and those who receive government benefits. In cities, especially, this group has seized power from the taxpayers, as the vast expansion of the public sector that has taken place since the beginning of the War on Poverty has finally reached a tipping point. In New York City, this coalition has helped roll back some of the reforms of the Giuliani years. In California cities and towns, it is thwarting the expansion of private businesses, Wal-Mart above all. In nearly 100 municipalities, it has imposed higher costs on tens of thousands of

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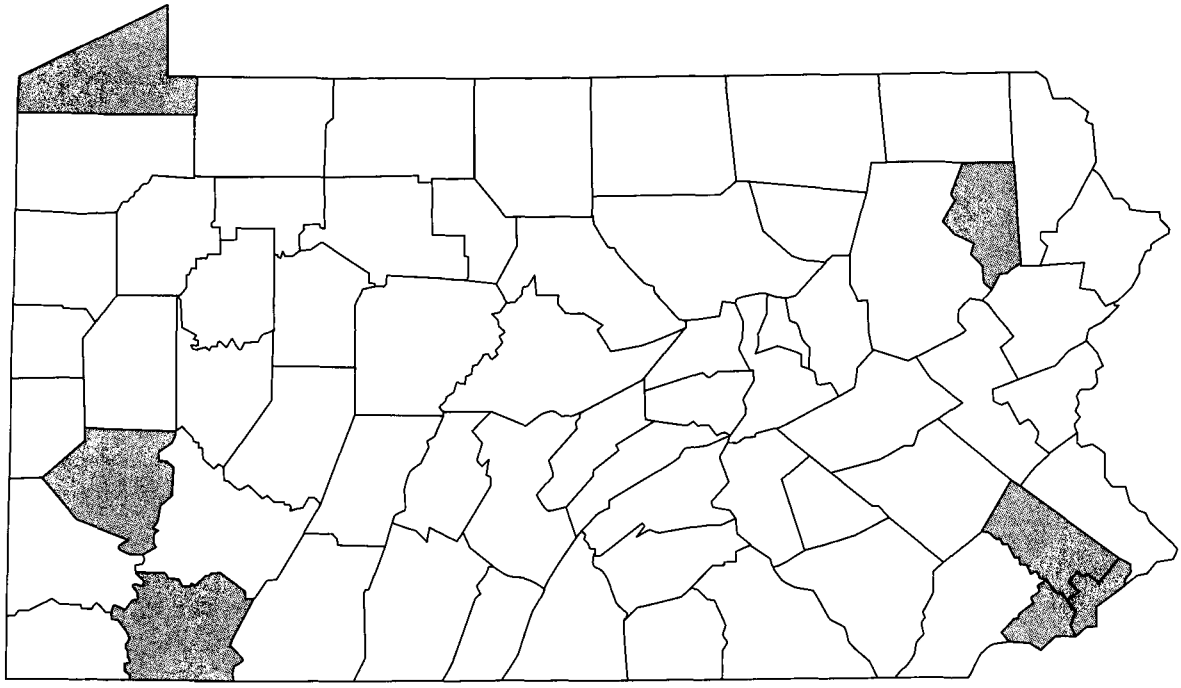

Even in the bluest of Blue states, like Pennsylvania (above) and California (p. 68), . . .

businesses by persuading city councils to pass "living-wage" laws.

This increasingly powerful public-sector movement results from the merging of two originally distinct forces. First are the government-employee unions, born in the 1950s and nowadays the 800-pound gorillas of policy debates in many statehouses and city councils. Today, public unions don't merely use their power to win contract concessions for their members. They help elect sympathetic legislators and defeat opponents of smaller government; they lobby for higher taxes, especially on the rich and on businesses; and they oppose legislative efforts, such as privatization initiatives, aimed at making government smaller and more efficient.

For years, government employees had no right to organize, on the grounds that there was no competition in the delivery of essential government services and that therefore public unions could hold cities and states hostage by going on strike. Even some private-sector union leaders questioned the wisdom of letting public-sector workers organize and giving them the right to strike. But that began to change in the mid-1950s, when the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) began lobbying for the right of local workers to organize and bargain collectively. The organization scored its first major victory in 1958, when it persuaded New York City mayor Robert Wagner, looking to strengthen his union support, to give municipal workers collective bargaining rights. Over the next several years, other states and cities, especially those with strong union movements, also passed laws allowing public employees to unionize. Buoyed by these victories, AFSCME's membership rose from 100,000 in 1955 to 250,000 by 1965 and to more than 1 million by 1985.

Other government-employee organizations followed AFSCME's lead. In 1960 the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) set out to win collective bargaining rights for U.S. teachers, using Mayor Wagner and labor-friendly New York as

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. . . the only districts that went for Kerry (shown here in gray) were urban.

a test case. Though New York's first teachers' walkout, in November 1960, had little public support, the union movement gained adherents among teachers nationwide, so that over the next five years there were 36 strikes against municipal school systems. In 1966 alone, another three dozen strikes occurred, as teacher militancy rose in places like Newark, Baltimore, and Youngstown, Ohio. Meanwhile, membership in the AFT more than doubled to 136,000 from 1960 through 1966.

In retrospect, most of the warnings voiced in those tumultuous years proved accurate. Political leaders and labor experts predicted that government-employee unions would use their monopoly power over public services to win contracts with

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work rules far more generous and undemanding than in the private sector, and that without the restraints on salaries and benefits that the free marketplace imposes on private firms, unions would win increasingly meaty compensation and pension packages that would be impossible to roll back once enacted.

But what critics did not anticipate was how far public-employee unions would move beyond collective bargaining and inject themselves into the electoral and legislative processes. Today, the endorsement of a public-sector union is crucial to the election of many local candidates, and public unions now often spend far more on lobbying and political advertising on local issues than any business group does. Nor could the critics have envisioned a time when a shrinking private-sector union movement would forge alliances with the public sector, and when the lines between the two would increasingly blur, as formerly private-sector unions, like the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), would come to represent increasing numbers of health-care and other workers whose jobs depend on public money.

"By the end of the millennium more New Yorkers worked in social services than on Wall Street."

Reinforcing the public-employee unions in the powerful new coalition of tax eaters are the social-services groups spawned by the War on Poverty. Nominally private, they are sustained by and organized around public funding. Before the War on Poverty, most social-services agencies were privately funded and had little stake in government spending policies. Groups like Catholic Charities, for instance, received less than 10 percent of their support from government sources. But all that changed beginning in 1965, when federal spending on social services soared, increasing from $800 million to $2.2 billion between 1965 and 1970, and then rocketing to $13 billion by 1980. This geyser of money transformed many formerly private welfare organizations into government contractors, and their employees into quasi-public workers. It also spurred the creation of vast new networks of such organizations, as social-services entrepreneurs conjured into being a constellation of housing groups, subsidized day-care centers, employment-training programs, health clinics, and much more—all designed to tap into the new War on Poverty money.

This social-services funding vastly expanded the publicly supported workforce almost overnight. Before the 1970s, the government didn't even count private social services as a sector, because it was so small. But in 1972, a Bureau of Labor Statistics employment census found 550,000 people working in the sector. By 1980, that number had more than doubled to 1.1 million. The sector's upward arc has continued unabated since then, with especially fast growth during the 1990s. Today the field teems with some 3.3 million workers, most supported by government-funded programs. Whereas in the early 1970s private social services accounted for less than 1 percent of the American workforce, today it accounts for 3 percent of jobs.

Because the clientele for social services is concentrated in the big cities, much of the growth in social-services employment took place there, too. In New York, for example, social-services jobs increased from 52,000 to 183,000 between 1975 and 2000, so that by the end of the millennium more New Yorkers worked in social services than on Wall Street. In Philadelphia, social-services jobs more than doubled to nearly 30,000 from 1988 (the first year for which numbers are available) to 2000. In Boston, during the same period, these jobs increased by 67 percent to nearly 55,000, while in Chicago they grew by nearly 140 percent to 83,000. In all these cases, social-services employment grew much faster than the cities' economies as a whole. And cities poured their

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own funds into such programs to augment the (much greater) federal spending, especially in the early 1980s, when the Reagan administration restrained the growth of federal social-services programs. New York City, for instance, increased its spending on programs for the homeless from $8 million in 1978, two years before Reagan beat Jimmy Carter, to $100 million annually by 1985. In the early 1980s, New York State increased its spending on alcohol and drug addiction programs alone by two-thirds to nearly $500 million.

Almost from the War on Poverty's inception, these social-services employees and their clients began to show themselves a powerful political force, as when New York welfare workers, for example, mobilized recipients in the early 1970s to storm government offices demanding higher benefits. Some social-services agencies organized their employees and clients into grassroots political operations, parlaying their huge empires built on government and foundation money into political power. Ramon Velez, for example—whose Bronx network of government-funded health centers, alcoholism clinics, and other programs garnered over $300 million in government money over 25 years—engineered the election of several city council and state assembly members in the Bronx, and Velez himself served on New York's city council.

At the same time that the War on Poverty was gearing up and federal spending on social services was beginning to soar, the Johnson administration created the two gigantic health-care programs, Medicaid and Medicare, providing care to the poor and the elderly, respectively. In the process, Washington vastly changed the economics of U.S. medical care, turning it increasingly into a government-funded industry. From the very start, Medicaid and Medicare, initiated within a year of each other, cost far more than anyone had expected, because they encouraged overuse of the health-care system, prompted overbilling by doctors and hospitals, and led to widespread fraud. In less than five years, the federal budget for Medicaid rose to $6 billion from just $1.2 billion in its first year, 1966, while expenditures by the states, which shared the program's cost, also ballooned. With so much money pouring in, the country's health-care industry mushroomed. In the entire decade before the federal programs began, U.S. health-care employment had increased by about 800,000 jobs, but in the first ten years of Medicaid and Medicare, the growth rate more than doubled, and the industry added more than 2 million new jobs, including more than 1 million in hospitals.

The new federal programs made many hospitals dependents of the state, especially in cities with the largest Medicaid populations. Within a few years, urban hospitals that had previously received very little federal money were living principally on Medicaid and Medicare. And once government had become a prime payer in the health-care system, hospitals that had low occupancy rates or duplicated services provided by other local institutions could survive on government dollars rather than being forced to close. Such institutions could gold plate their treatments of patients in order to increase revenues, so that hospitalizations and length of hospital stays increased. As a result, by 1980—to take only one example—experts estimated that New York City had 5,000 more hospital beds than it really needed. Also as a result, at least in part, health-care jobs grew from 3.9 percent of the U.S. private workforce in 1965 to nearly 10 percent today. Shrinking the bloated system and stemming abuses became politically impossible. Above all, what would become of all those who worked in hospitals that should be closed?

The gradual government takeover of health care—a process still continuing—has transformed the industry's institutions, executives, and workers into lobbyists for ever-greater public monies and expanding programs, and tireless foes of efforts to restrain costs. Hospitals and health-care unions were the chief opponents of the Gingrich Congress's efforts to balance the federal budget in the mid-1990s in part by cutting the growth of Medicaid and Medicare, and these special interests successfully derailed some of the steepest proposed cuts. At the state and local levels, especially in cities where the industry heavily depends on Medicaid and Medicare, hospitals and hospital workers have become two of the most influential power blocs. In New York

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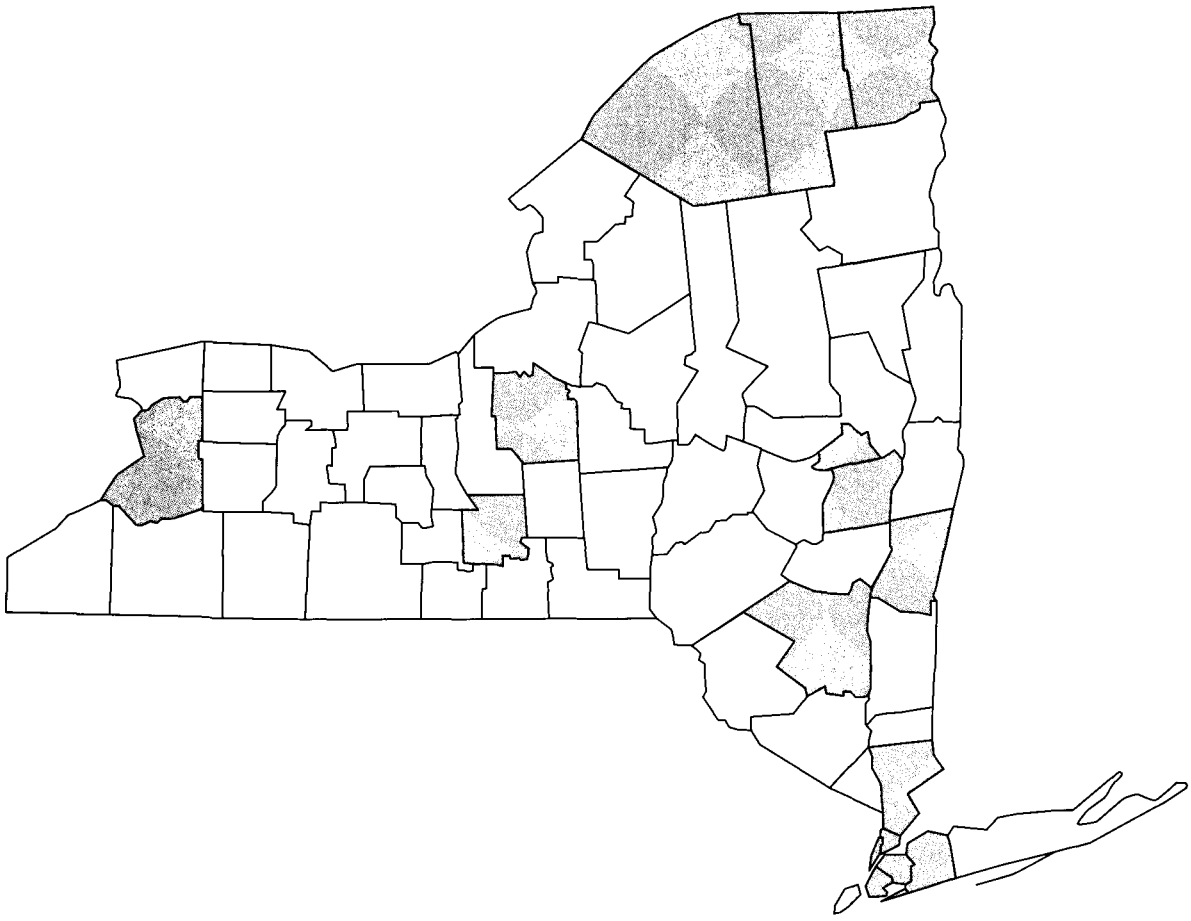

District by district, even New York is Bush country.

State, for instance, a coalition of hospitals and unions spent $13 million in 1999, a record for Albany, lobbying to turn back cuts in the state's huge Medicaid system. Dennis Rivera, the head of Local 1199, a New York City–based union of health-care workers, has become the most powerful union leader in the state, far more influential than the head of the state AFL-CIO.

The electoral activism of this New New Left coalition—public-employee unions, hospitals and health-care worker unions, and social-services agencies—has reshaped the politics of many cities. As the country's national political scene has edged rightward, thwarting their ambitions in Washington, these groups have turned their attention to urban America, where they still have the power to influence public policy.

Increasingly in U.S. cities, the road to electoral success passes through the public-employee/health-care/social-services sector. In New York, for instance, more than two-thirds of city council members are former government employees or ex-workers in health care or social services. The first Latino speaker of the California State Assembly, Antonio Villaraigosa—who narrowly lost the 2001 election for mayor of

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Los Angeles and served as a national co-chair of John Kerry's presidential campaign—is a former organizer for the Los Angeles teachers' union. Jane Campbell, the current mayor of Cleveland, snapped up a $3,000 grant back in 1974 to start WomenSpace, a feminist advocacy group, and used her role as executive director of the organization to launch a 20-year career in elective office in Ohio. Kansas City mayor Kay Barnes entered public life working as a paid staffer in the 1960s for the Cross-Lines Cooperative Council, a local social-services network, and she later helped found and run the Women's Resource Service, an advocacy center on the campus of the University of Missouri–Kansas City.

One reason that these politicians have succeeded electorally is that those who work in the public sector have different voting priorities from private-sector workers or business owners. An exit poll conducted by *City Journal* of the 2001 New York mayoral election found that private-sector workers heavily backed Michael Bloomberg, the businessman candidate who had been endorsed by Rudy Giuliani and had run on a pledge of no new taxes (which he broke after his first year in office), while those who worked in the public/health-care/social-services sectors favored his Democratic opponent, who ran on a promise of raising taxes to fund further services. In the race, Bloomberg won among private-sector voters by 17 percentage points, while the Democrat won by 15 points among those who worked in the public/nonprofit sectors.

And of course public-sector workers, who know they are going to the polls to elect their bosses, make sure to remember to vote. Though they make up about one-third of New York City's workforce, public/nonprofit-sector voters made up 37 percent of the electorate in the 2001 mayoral race. Minority workers who earned their living in the public sector were dramatically more likely than their private-sector counterparts to vote.

With so much of their economic future at stake in elections, the tax eaters have emerged as the new infantry of political campaigns, replacing the ward captains and district leaders of old-time political clubs. Today it's the members of the New New Left, through their unions and community-based organizations, who are most likely to run political phone banks, distribute campaign literature and run get-out-the-vote efforts for their favored candidates. Indeed, when a member of the Local 1199 health-care workers union ran for New York's city council in 2003, a local Democratic politician noted admiringly that the candidate, through her union colleagues, could field "a million foot soldiers." And, like the old Tammany Hall and other urban political machines, these efforts have sparked complaints. Members of the New New Left advocacy group ACORN, which ran aggressive voter-registration drives in many cities during the 2004 elections, were accused of submitting fake or forged registrations in places such as Duluth, Cincinnati, and St. Petersburg, Florida.

Perhaps it's not surprising that the urban Left has evolved into so narrow a movement, promoting no more than its own self-interest. Though it started out as a romantic, if wrongheaded, idea, the War on Poverty was the child of idealists who really believed that a benevolent, paternalistic government could offer solutions that America's private economy couldn't provide for the poor. But the most cherished ideals and programs of the movement have turned out to be demonstrably wrong, and many Americans now reject them. Unlimited welfare proved an economic and social disaster, producing an underclass of perpetual recipients who, after years on the dole, felt incapable of functioning as productive citizens. Liberalization of the criminal laws and judicial leniency, part of a War-on-Poverty mind-set that saw criminals as victims of society, only led to soaring crime rates, which drove law-abiding citizens out of cities and condemned those who could not leave to lives of fear. Government-funded alcohol and drug rehabilitation programs that placed little emphasis on personal responsibility and individual redemption had zero effect on the rise of addiction.

By the mid-1990s, Americans were eager for reform, and they got it. Changes in welfare law that imposed time limits on assistance and required recipients to work have turned out to be a great success, reducing public-assistance

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rolls and getting millions of people back to work, without raising the poverty rate. Tough, activist policing innovations have sharply reduced crime, freeing millions of Americans, especially those in inner cities, from fear.

In the face of such realities, the new urban Left has emerged as an increasingly cynical coalition ever more focused on goals that benefit its members and their allies, even though it retains the jargon of "social justice." The living-wage movement is largely the work of unions more interested in laws that bolster union membership and derail privatization or productivity-boosting measures than in legislation that genuinely helps the poor. Many of the living-wage laws enacted around the country exempt unionized companies from adhering to wage guidelines, encouraging firms to unionize. Legislative bodies commandeered by these advocates have cynically enacted laws that have been a boon to their allies but have harmed the cities themselves, as for example the New York City Council's passage of a living-wage law that raised the wages of home health-care workers but cost the city and state millions of dollars—in the midst of the city's worst budget crisis ever. In the same spirit, in municipalities throughout California, the New New Left coalition has successfully advocated for laws that restrict consumers' choices by making it difficult for Wal-Mart and other nonunion retailers to open in places where unionized stores predominate.

But by donning the mantle of "social justice" and invoking the liberation language of the 1960s—for example, in its campaigns to win domestic-partner benefits for municipal workers—the New New Left has managed to dupe a generation of celebrity liberals, idealistic young voters, and religious leaders who have become their allies in the Blue-state coalition. Actor buddies Matt Damon and Ben Affleck have campaigned for living-wage laws in their home state of Massachusetts, while clergy hold pro-living-wage religious services, blissfully unaware of how unions have hijacked the movement for their self-interested goals. The union representing television and radio actors urged its members to boycott California stores during the state's 2003 supermarket-industry strike, and celebrities like actress Melissa Gilbert joined workers on the picket lines. Groups like ACORN rely in many of their campaigns on the volunteer labor of idealistic college students, who are unaware of the controversy that the organization generates by refusing to pay its own workers minimum wages and by using federal legislation like the Community Reinvestment Act to shake down banks.

"In the cities, the tax-eater sector is now so large that it can thwart reforms aimed at its programs."

Regardless of how transparent its aims now seem, this new coalition will remain formidable in the cities, because the tax-eater sector is now so large that it can easily thwart reforms aimed at undermining its programs. But the coalition is also becoming the real power in national campaigns, working both within the Democratic Party and outside it. AFSCME, the AFT, and SEIU were among the largest contributors to the Media Fund, a $65 million advertising effort aimed at defeating President Bush in 2004. Those groups, plus ACORN, also supplied much of the manpower for the national voter-registration effort aimed at defeating the president. A succession of Democratic presidential hopefuls traveled to New York to seek the blessing of 1199/SEIU union chief Dennis Rivera, who once held a seat on the Democratic National Committee, and when John Kerry picked his running mate, he immediately called SEIU boss Andrew Stern, a John Edwards supporter, to say, "I heard you." About one in ten delegates to the 2004 Democratic National Convention was a member of a teachers' union.

The tax-eaters' party has seized control of many of America's cities; now it is trying to make the next big leap. ■

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Corporate America's New Stealth Raiders

Union-dominated public pension funds seek to control the boardroom.

Nicole Gelinas

There are no Winn-Dixies in New York City. But geographical inconvenience didn't stop seven of New York's elected officials from asserting jurisdiction over the Florida-based supermarket chain's corporate policies in July. As trustees of the New York City Employees' Retirement System (Nycers), city comptroller William Thompson and Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum, along with Gotham's five borough presidents, persuaded Winn-Dixie's board to prohibit discrimination against workers on the basis of sexual orientation. "This is great news for the gay, bisexual, lesbian, and transgender community," Gotbaum told reporters. "Corporate America needs to ensure that all people are treated equally and humanely."

Winn-Dixie was just the latest triumph in the push by Nycers and its companion fund, the New York City Teachers' Retirement System (Nyctrs), to persuade corporate America to "ensure a respectful and supportive atmosphere for all employees." Within the past two years, 20 Fortune 500 companies—including Duke Energy, El Paso Corporation, and JCPenney—have adopted the same sex-discrimination policy proposed by Thompson, Gotbaum, and the other pols and union activists who sit on the Nycers and Nyctrs boards. And this isn't the New York funds' only issue. As Thompson told the New York Society of Security Analysts in November 2003: "We targeted 88 different companies with shareholder resolutions and other initiatives on a wide range of crucial issues, including executive compensation, director elections, and the impact of corporate behavior on the environment and human rights."

No longer content merely to change corporate America from the outside, public-pension funds are now taking advantage of a chastened and weakened post-Enron corporate America to shift the focus of their political and economic power to the inside of the corporate boardroom. Their resolve to change the world one shareholder resolution, press release, and board election at a time spells trouble for taxpayers, U.S. corporations, and the national economy.

These public-sector funds are uniquely powerful for two reasons. First, they are huge, accounting for an ever-greater share of the 20 to 25 percent of investments in the U.S. equity markets that pension funds—both public and private—constitute. Public pension assets have grown sevenfold in 20 years, to $2.3 trillion, while corporate assets have crept up more slowly, to $4.2 trillion—only about twice as big as the public funds, compared with three times as big two decades ago. The reason, of course, is that private-sector America largely ceased to offer its employees traditional, corporate-controlled, "defined-benefit" pension plans. Instead, employers started to make "defined contributions" to each individual employee's retirement account, his 401(k), which immediately became his property—and his responsibility for invest-

Graphs by Alberto Mena

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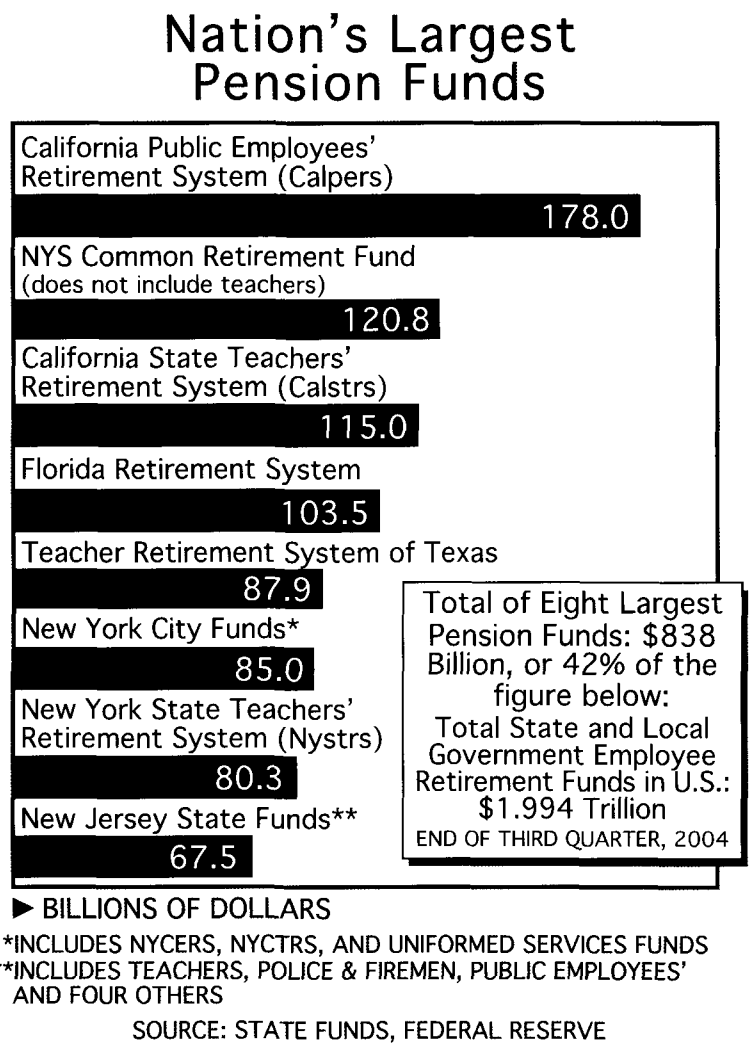
Nation's Largest Pension Funds
California Public Employees' Retirement System (Calpers)
178.0
NYS Common Retirement Fund (does not include teachers)
120.8
California State Teachers' Retirement System (Calstrs)
115.0
Florida Retirement System
103.5
Teacher Retirement System of Texas
87.9
New York City Funds*
85.0
New York State Teachers' Retirement System (Nystrs)
80.3
New Jersey State Funds**
67.5
Total of Eight Largest Pension Funds: $838 Billion, or 42% of the figure below:
Total State and Local Government Employee Retirement Funds in U.S.: $1.994 Trillion
END OF THIRD QUARTER, 2004
▶ BILLIONS OF DOLLARS
*INCLUDES NYCERS, NYCTRS, AND UNIFORMED SERVICES FUNDS
**INCLUDES TEACHERS, POLICE & FIREMEN, PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' AND FOUR OTHERS
SOURCE: STATE FUNDS, FEDERAL RESERVE

ing wisely. But public-sector America, as a result of the political power of its unions, retained defined-benefit plans, which state and local politicos made ever more lavish.

Moreover, nearly one-fourth of these public pension-fund assets are concentrated in just two intensely Blue states: some $300 billion in California's Public Employees' Retirement and State Teachers' Retirement Systems (Calpers and Calstrs), $85 billion in New York City's funds, and $200 billion in New York State's funds. This more than half-trillion, under the control of leftist politicians and union honchos, is the largest single special-interest bloc of money in the American capital markets.

Second, while private-sector mutual-fund managers focus on picking lucrative investments, because that's how they get paid, these left-leaning public fund trustees have different incentives. Sure, they want their funds to perform well, but if they don't, their public-employee clients don't get hurt, because the defined pensions of those workers are guaranteed by the taxpayers, who must make up any shortfall if the pension funds perform poorly. So unlike a private fund manager, who only wants to see the value of his investment rise and who will sell it if he loses confidence in the company or its managers, highly political public pension trustees are free to pursue political as well as economic objectives.

New York City's funds first discovered their political heft when they teamed up with Ivy League and church endowments in the mid-1980s to pressure companies with business in South Africa either to lobby against apartheid or to withdraw from that nation.

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Nycers submitted dozens of apartheid-related shareholder resolutions to corporate boards, and met with success after success. When apartheid collapsed, the funds took much credit. The New York City funds, along with the same church groups and endowments, then successfully lobbied corporations with business ties to Northern Ireland to fight employer discrimination against Catholics in that region.

Paradoxically, Nycers's first big activist failure set going a chain of events that ended by radically expanding the scope for such shareholder activism. In 1991, the Cracker Barrel restaurant chain banned gay employees—and fired nearly a dozen of them for "failing to demonstrate normal heterosexual values." Nycers, sensing its chance to drill down to corporate micromanagement, submitted a shareholder resolution to Cracker Barrel's corporate parent, CBRL Group, in 1992, targeting the chain's discriminatory policy. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), which determines which proposals reach corporate ballots for shareholder votes, ruled against Nycers, declaring that the decision to exclude gays was an "ordinary" business decision, not subject to shareholder review. The SEC said that the line between corporate governance and micromanagement was becoming blurred—but its decision proved that it still believed that there *was* a line and that corporate honchos were free to make their own management decisions, good or bad.

But in 1998, in response to sustained lobbying by the public-sector pension funds, the SEC announced that it would reverse its Cracker Barrel rule and force corporations to include shareholder proposals on some employment-related issues on a case-by-case basis. Shareholders should have a chance "to express their views to company management on employment-related proposals that raise sufficiently significant social issues," the SEC said. So here was the green light to the public-sector funds, which had been trying to force "fair-labor"—that is, pro-union—practices on corporate America for years.

In the wake of the corporate scandals of the past three years, Congress, the SEC, and the New York Stock Exchange have enacted the most sweeping corporate-governance changes since the Securities Acts of 1933 and 1934—changes that public-sector shareholders took as an all-out, let-'er-rip license for activism. The Sarbanes-Oxley law, in addition to making corporate executives personally liable for the accuracy of their financial statements, also mandates that a company be governed by a board of directors mostly independent of management, to prevent cronyism from nurturing the systemic fraud that sank Enron and WorldCom. Since Sarbanes-Oxley became law two years ago, Nycers and Calpers have rolled out dozens of shareholder proposals targeting hundreds of companies. These resolutions cost corporate America $91 million annually just to process, estimates UCLA law professor Stephen M. Bainbridge—all in the name of shareholder democracy.

"Shareholders should start acting like the owners they are," California treasurer and Calpers board member Phil Angelides said in 2002. "The age of investor complacency must be replaced by a new era of investor democracy." New York comptroller Thompson made clear just how expansive he takes this mandate to be: "We must recognize that a company's conduct with regard to areas such as the environment and human rights is just as significant in evaluating overall corporate governance as the independence of board audit committees and executive compensation."

It's no mystery what "area" public pension-fund trustees, most of them unionists or politicians beholden to unions, deem most "significant." Nycers, for example, with board members from the Teamsters, the Transport Workers Union, and the DC 37 Local that represents government employees, has renewed its push for strong workers'-rights standards, this time with a global gloss. It is trying to force 21 American companies—including ExxonMobil, Home Depot, Wal-Mart, and Hasbro—to adopt the UN International Labor Organization (ILO) standards, which mandate doing business only with suppliers who allow workers to form and join unions, prohibit child labor and forced labor, and bar discrimination and intimidation. The ILO also pushes for an "adequate living wage" globally, just as unions and public officials do on

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the local level, and it mandates that a certain number of its own staffers be women.

The ILO standards may be a nice idea—but in real life, they may hurt those they're meant to help. The *New York Times*'s Nicholas Kristof, no right-winger, said as much in an April 2004 column about a ten-year-old African boy who spent his day foraging for wood to sell to support his family. "If child labor hawks manage to keep Abakr from working, without giving him a school to attend, he and his family will simply be poorer than ever," Kristof wrote. At a Bangladeshi garment factory forced to lay off 50,000 children ahead of a proposed U.S. regulation on imports, Kristof noted, "Many ended up in worse jobs, like prostitution." But further, the ILO proposal, and a Calpers human rights–based investment ban in countries like China, Pakistan, and Indonesia, pose a larger question: Why should municipal politicians have a hand in setting American foreign policy?

"Why should municipal politicians have a hand in setting American foreign policy?"

The pension funds have also tried to direct U.S. tax policy. In California, Treasurer Angelides has teamed up with the state's major labor unions to fight corporate tax expatriation, targeting Tyco and Ingersoll-Rand (each incorporated in Bermuda). But it is the U.S. Treasury's job, not that of a union-based pension fund, to ensure that corporations don't use shell companies to avoid or evade taxes. And if the California and New York pension funds disapprove of Tyco for its alleged aggressive tax avoidance, why do they continue to invest in the company? Lots of other institutional investors have made the opposite decision: Tyco traded at around $60 a share during the era of Dennis Kozlowski's compulsive scheming, and has plummeted to around $35 a share today.

For all their global and national posturing, these pension-fund trustees have a basic agenda that's really much closer to home and much more self-interested. Take Calpers, for instance, whose board of directors was until December 31 headed by one Sean Harrigan, who moonlights as the regional executive director of one of California's most powerful private-sector unions: the United Food and Commercial Workers Union. This tie got Calpers enmeshed in a hopeless fiduciary tangle last year, when the fund mounted a corporate proxy fight against the Safeway supermarket chain right after Safeway had resolved a four-month strike by Harrigan's union at its California supermarkets.

Calpers, coincidentally enough, decided that this was an auspicious time to take up the cause of "shareholder value" against Safeway's board of directors, so the fund mounted an unsuccessful campaign in mid-2004 to vote down Safeway's chairman and CEO in the service, purportedly, of safeguarding the pension fund's shareholder interests.

It's true that Safeway stock is a dog—but that's because the company must compete with low-cost upstarts like Wal-Mart while burdened by an outdated, and untenable, labor-cost structure, thanks to Harrigan's union members. A rational investor with no confidence in Safeway's board ahead of a cutthroat fight with looming food giant Wal-Mart would simply have sold Safeway stock (and a graph of Safeway's downward price trajectory over the past few years shows that they have sold in droves). But if Calpers didn't own Safeway, Harrigan (who says he recused himself from the fight) wouldn't have had a platform to stand and fight management on. Who bears the risk of Calpers's continued investment in the dismally performing Safeway? California's long-suffering taxpayers do, of course.

California taxpayers shouldn't view Harrigan's ouster from the Calpers board as a sign

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that the fund is stepping back from pro-union activism, however. Trustee Rob Feckner, his likely successor, is no less incestuously involved with California Big Labor and seems determined to bar the fund from future lucrative private-equity investments in companies specializing in the privatization of public-sector jobs and services.

When the duly elected Lucia Mar school board decided—quite legally—to privatize its school-bus operations in 2000 to save taxpayers money, it laid off nearly 50 drivers, represented by the California School Employees Association (CSEA) union, who mounted an aggressive campaign to get their jobs back. Calpers's Feckner is on the CSEA board. The CSEA and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) pressed Calpers to divest itself of shares in companies that take over formerly public-sector jobs—and in November 2003, Calpers's investment committee voted to reduce its investments in such companies. Calpers has also avoided new investments in companies that build or staff charter schools. "The policy [will] pave the way for other public pension funds to take similar action and send a strong anti-privatization signal to companies that try to make profits off of public services," then–CSEA president J. J. Jelincic said after the union's partial victory.

In New York, Nycers adopted a flat prohibition on similar investments in 2003: "Nycers will not entertain proposals that have the potential of eliminating public-sector jobs," the fund declared. Nycers and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) also teamed up last year to push Waste Management, a private sanitation firm active in New York, to "report on the effect on the company's business strategy of measures to oppose privatization of the provision of waste collection, disposal, transfer and recycling services." This is not corporate governance, of course, but naked special-interest activism. And let's remember that Nycers is funded largely by the taxpayers—who have their own interest in keeping government costs down, sometimes through privatization of services.

As pro-union advocates, the public pension-fund boards have a central, irreducible conflict of interest: for them, workers always come first, rather than the success of the corporations in which they invest. And it is not only union officials on the funds' boards who push this agenda, but also the ambitious left-leaning politicians on the boards, who are hopelessly beholden—financially and politically—to union labor. Ten of Calpers's 13 board members are union members, union officers, or current and former politicians who depend or depended on union support and endorsement.

Board member Angelides, for example, is California's treasurer—a statewide elected office. But he is already looking toward the next big thing: the Dem has announced that he'll run against Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2006. To win a Democratic primary, he'll need the unions and the Democratic Party's leftist wing behind him—and what better way to accomplish that than to use pension-fund investments as a prop?

Earlier this year, national Democrats were blowing the Abu Ghraib prison scandal way out of proportion, and Angelides used his Calpers leverage to gain precious on-air time. Calpers invests in defense contractor CACI—and CACI came under fire in the spring because an employee allegedly supervised military police at Abu Ghraib when torture allegedly took place. Angelides seized the opportunity to badger CACI president Kenneth Johnson at a public press conference. "The meeting at times resembled a hostile interrogation itself, as Angelides repeatedly interrupted Johnson," reported the *San Francisco Examiner*. "You've been in the wrong place at the wrong time," Angelides lashed. "Either CACI needs to get out of this line of business, or our pension funds need to get out of this company." This was political preening in the first degree—and it also showed that fiduciary duty toward fund beneficiaries often takes a backseat to activist politicking.

New York state comptroller Alan Hevesi isn't in quite the same league as Angelides when it comes to publicity-mongering—but he isn't shy about twisting his own "investment concerns" to

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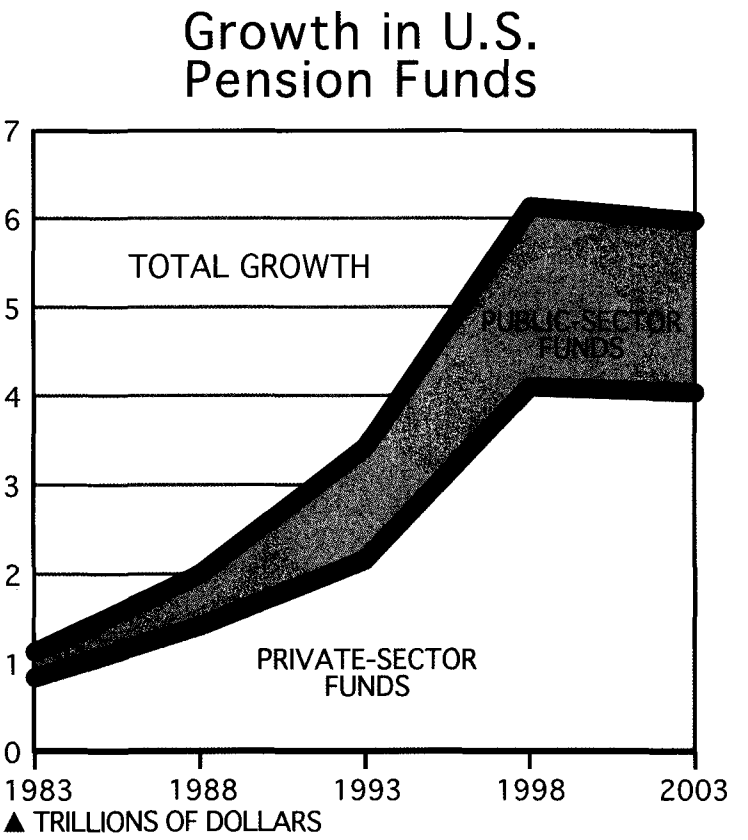

SOURCE: FEDERAL RESERVE FLOW OF FUNDS ACCOUNTS OF THE UNITED STATES RELEASE

meet political ends. Back in October, Hevesi jumped headfirst into the election controversy over conservative-run Sinclair Broadcast Group, which had proposed to preempt regular programming on its television stations to show a documentary critical of candidate John Kerry. Fellow Democrat Hevesi fired off a letter to Sinclair executives to warn that running the documentary could mean lost profits from commercials—and that "bad news" reports about the broadcast could affect Sinclair's "already poor performance."

Hevesi fretted aloud that "Sinclair [could be] more interested in advancing its partisan political views than in protecting shareholder value"—which raises the question: Why not *sell*, rather than waste time writing letters and adding to "bad news"? But, of course, Hevesi's letter won him a few days of publicity—and points for his party, when Sinclair backed off.

Despite these obvious conflicts of interest, the pension officials insist that all their efforts toward increasing shareholder democracy are in the service of that singular goal: to make sure that American companies are doing the best that they can to increase market value for *all* shareholders. The essential problem with this argument is that democracy, while great for governments, doesn't belong in the corporate boardroom. Corporations are not partnerships or sole proprietorships—they are not meant to be run directly, or even indirectly, by the shareholders.

"Contrary to the democratic rhetoric of today's shareholder activists," writes UCLA's Bainbridge, "limitations on shareholder voting rights are . . . as old as the corporate form itself. Separating ownership and control by vesting decision-making authority in a centralized entity distinct from the shareholders . . . is what makes the large public

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corporation feasible." Investors don't buy shares in a company's stock because they think they can run the company better than the current management; they buy shares in a company's stock because they believe that the current management is doing a good job and they want to get in on the profits.

Nevertheless, the SEC, trying to make up for being as asleep through the 1990s as the CIA and the FBI, has unveiled a stunning new "shareholder-access" plan that would give the public-pension funds even more power to advance their special interests within corporate America. It proposes to allow activist minority shareholders—that is, the funds—to nominate directors to a corporate board.

Currently, boards appoint their own internal nominating committees. Shareholders can't vote against a particular nominee, but they can withhold votes from that candidate as a show of no confidence. As a last resort, if they are disgruntled (and rich) enough, they can mount, and pay for, proxy fights to encourage fellow shareholders to propose an alternative director or slate of directors, a process that has ousted entrenched and dysfunctional boards.

Now, the SEC proposes to let unhappy minority shareholders nominate their own directors—at the targeted company's expense—if 35 percent of shareholders withhold their votes for an existing or board-nominated director as a display of no confidence. Only one group has the ability and willingness to nominate its own dissident directors: public pension funds.

The public sector can already taste the awesome potential of this new power and has been ferociously lobbying for it, with full-page ads in the *Wall Street Journal* and a heavyweight letter to SEC chairman William Donaldson. Signers, including Calpers's Angelides, Nycers's Thompson, and New York state comptroller Hevesi, as usual, hold up Enron, WorldCom, and their fallen brethren as poster children for corporate reform—conveniently ignoring the vast majority of Fortune 500 companies that *haven't* failed. In truth, the SEC's plan will force corporations to fend off a costly plague of frivolous proxy fights just as they fend off frivolous lawsuits.

The Business Roundtable—whose members include the CEOs of 150 well-run corporations like ChevronTexaco, HP, Home Depot, and Pfizer—have pointed out the scariest defect of this scheme to the SEC: "the significant leverage [that] the rules [would] provide to special-interest organizations intent on hijacking the director election process for the explicit purpose of gaining boardroom representation of their agendas." Guess who they mean. "Every member of the board has a fiduciary responsibility to all shareholders," the Roundtable's Johanna Schneider told me—not to one group of shareholders. "Board members don't have [separate] agendas; they have a fiduciary duty." The SEC's proposal points the way to Germany's failed model of mandatory board representation for workers.

Since these trustees want a direct hand in overseeing corporate America, it's fair to ask how well they do at overseeing their own funds. The answer isn't confidence-inspiring. They outsource the buying and selling of their investments to professional money managers, whose performance, according to a *National Tax Journal* study by Julia Coronado of the Federal Reserve Board, Eric Engen of the American Enterprise Institute, and Brian Knight of Brown University, was about one percentage point below that of private-sector pension funds between 1968 and 1983, and 1 to 2 percent below from 1986 and 1990 (a period during which the researchers included mutual funds in the universe of private-sector funds). A Calpers-sponsored study of 50 large municipal pension funds and 50 large corporate pension funds between 1994 and 1998 found that corporate funds returned 12.3 percent a year, while the public funds returned just 11.4 percent a year.

And the fact that the public-sector fund trustees outsource their money-management responsibilities to the private sector gives politicians a twisted excuse to meddle in the corporate affairs of the companies in which they invest. Because they stuck with the invest-

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ments picked for them by the pros, public fund trustees argue, they must concentrate on ensuring that corporate executives don't run their investments into the ground. Of course, if shareholder-resolution activism really had a positive effect on investments, the private-sector firms that actually manage the money would insist on handling that task themselves and would assign teams of people to draw up resolutions and submit them at board meetings—because the private-sector managers, not the public-sector trustees, are the ones rewarded or punished for performance.

But even if public-sector pension funds don't perform terribly, their performance is never enough to compensate taxpayers for a massive concentrated risk that is not present in private-sector 401(k) accounts. The fact that the taxpayers guarantee to make up any pension-fund shortfalls means that in bear markets municipal governments often raise taxes or cut services to cover mushrooming pension obligations. New York City taxpayers have had to pony up nearly $2.6 billion a year since the tech bubble burst nearly four years ago, and the city's Office of Management and Budget expects that New Yorkers will pay $4.4 billion a year to meet these obligations—nearly 9 percent of the city's total budget—by 2008. In California, Governor Schwarzenegger is *still* floating "emergency" deficit bonds a year after his election to pay at least $1 billion a year in unexpected pension costs to cover chronic multibillion-dollar shortfalls. Manhattan Institute senior fellow E. J. McMahon wrote last year that the current municipal pension-fund system was "a ticking time-bomb—ready to explode again with the next market down-cycle—if it's not reformed."

"Municipal governments often raise taxes or cut services to cover mushrooming pension obligations."

His recipe for reform is simple and correct: New York—and other jurisdictions—should "replace [its] old-fashioned defined-benefit pension with the sort of defined-contribution plan that's come to dominate private-sector retirement planning." The private sector is still learning the hard way that defined-benefit pension funds are unsustainable. In November, the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, a government insurance company that guarantees pensions for 44 million private-sector workers, announced that its deficit had doubled, to $23.3 billion, in just one year. The reason? Too many bankrupt firms like US Airways and LTV Corp. were unable to keep promises made long ago to employees who are retiring now.

The same thing could happen to state and local workers when the baby boomers retire in droves. Today's municipal workers who look forward to a taxpayer-funded retirement could see benefits cut, if younger taxpayers simply refuse to shoulder double-digit tax increases to make good on luxury retirement payments promised in decades past. Defined-contribution pension plans in the public sector would protect government workers from this crisis scenario now—they'd have their retirement money safely in their own hands, not in the hands of some future politician. At the very least, cities and states could begin by offering only such plans to all new hires. Foreseeing such a possibility, Calpers in December came out unequivocally against President Bush's proposal to allow Americans to divert a portion of their Social Security contributions into their own private accounts. After all, if Social Security is democratized through worker-owned accounts, Calpers and its East Coast counterparts will stand revealed as the unsustainable anachronisms they are.

But why should taxpayers continue to pay so that Sean Harrigan and Betsy Gotbaum can tell corporate America what to do with billions of dollars of other people's money?

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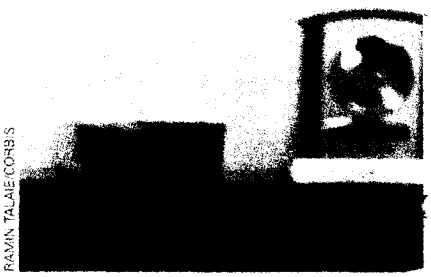
The Empire State's Quickest Route to Reform

It's time for someone to wield the power of New York's governorship for the public interest.



RAMIN TALAIE/CORBIS

Steven Malanga

With Rudy Giuliani seemingly intent on running for the presidency in 2008, and Charles Schumer staying in his U.S. Senate seat, New York attorney general Eliot Spitzer is now the odds-on favorite to become the state's next governor. But the key question is not whether he can win in November 2006, but whether he can be the type of reform governor that the Empire State so desperately needs right now.

For the government that Spitzer will likely take over is universally derided as the country's most costly and dysfunctional. Though nominally divided between a Democratic assembly and a Republican senate, the New York legislature has in fact only one ruling party—the spending and patronage party, which has erected a massive public sector now crushing the state's taxpayers. With a nod and a wink across the aisle, GOP legislators shovel billions into the state university, suburban school districts, and the state's hospital system, while Democrats aim their billions at CUNY, mass transit, and social services, including by far the country's biggest Medicaid program. Both parties, meanwhile, have proved ingenious about squeezing ever more money out of the state for this spending, saddling New Yorkers with the nation's highest state and local taxes and also creating a virtual shadow government of quasi-independent authorities, boards, and commissions that float bonds and spend money outside the official state budget. So precariously perched is this fiscal edifice that the state careens from one

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Current gubernatorial front-runner Eliot Spitzer should follow the example . . .

budget crisis to another, while each year's budget brings new taxes, fees, or financing gimmicks.

The situation has become so desperate that a broad array of New Yorkers are now proposing a slew of reform measures, from a state constitutional convention to a guerrilla-style effort to unseat unresponsive legislators. But these solutions range from the unfeasible to the potentially lethal. The real solution is much simpler. What New York really needs is a reform-minded chief executive who can wield skillfully and courageously the powerful weapons that the state constitution

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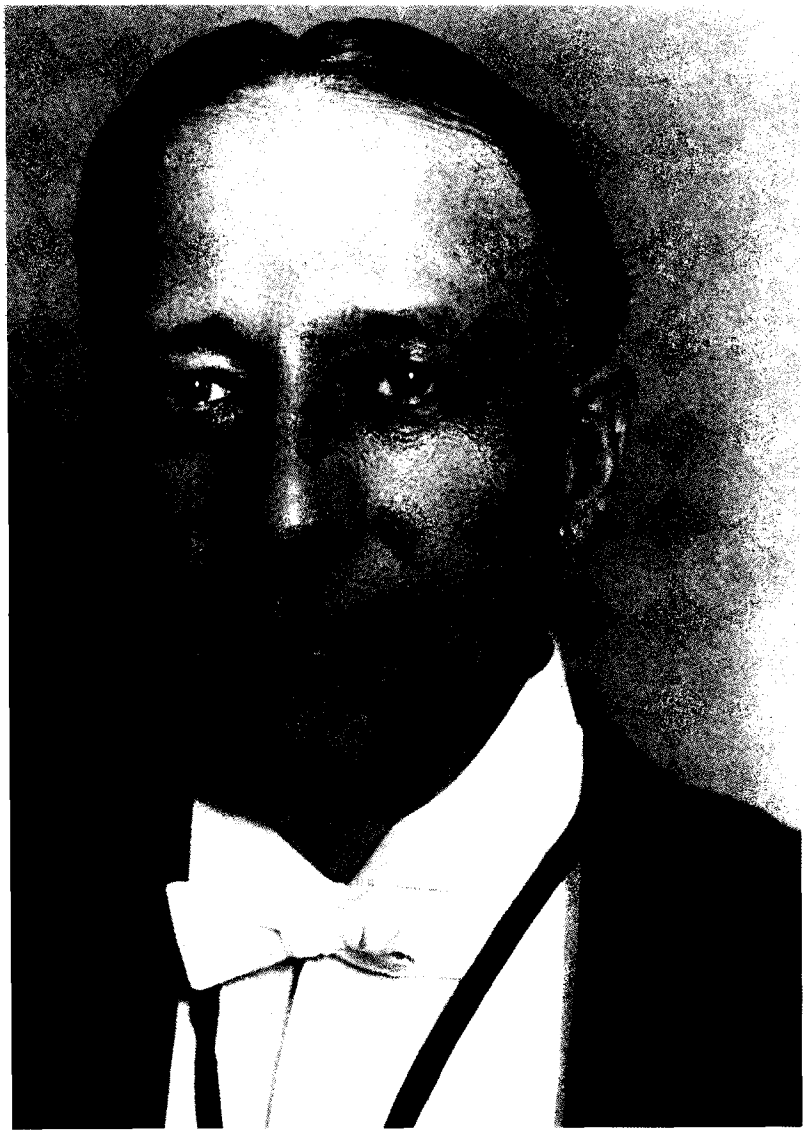

UNDERWOOD & UNDERWOOD/CORBIS

. . . of governors and presidential aspirants Al Smith . . .

already gives the governor's office to wrest back control of Albany from the legislature and its swarm of special interests.

Should he win, Spitzer should take as his model Thomas Dewey, another two-fisted prosecutor who had built a national reputation for effectiveness by busting mobsters before he won the governorship in 1943. Dewey assumed an office that Governor Al Smith—in what columnist Walter Lippmann called "one of the greatest achievements in modern American politics"—had made awesomely powerful, especially in giving the governor a tight control over the budget that allowed him to set the state's agenda, control that has lasted to this day. Dewey wielded that power fearlessly. He faced down the state's special interests, both in his own GOP and across the aisle. He resisted demands from leaders of his party to fill his administration with patronage appointments. He forced a GOP-dominated legislature to reapportion itself to reflect population changes, a task it had shirked for 25 years, and he prevented GOP leaders from raiding a capital fund that he had set up for postwar building projects. He continued the effort, begun by Smith in the 1920s, to eliminate state agencies, boards, and commissions.

When special interests tried to stymie his reform efforts, he fought implacably. Despite fierce resistance from the city's teachers' lobby and its Democratic allies, for instance, he reorganized management of the New York City education system, eliminating the power of the teacher-dominated board of superintendents and giving control to a single professional superintendent, to the applause of good-government groups. When legislators tried to skip out on votes for such controversial reform legislation, the sergeant at arms would round them up from the statehouse's nooks and crannies, dragging one worried Republican assemblyman from his hiding place under his desk to vote. Little wonder that Dewey came to refer to the state senate and assembly as "my legislature."

Of course, in equally skilled and determined hands, an office as powerful as Al Smith made

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New York's governorship can be an instrument for ill as well as for good—and it was just such a dynamic governor who created the mess that is now crushing the Empire State. In his 15-year reign, Nelson Rockefeller conjured into being New York's giant welfare state—and then left it to his successors to grapple with the problems that it posed. Derided by conservatives in his own GOP as a "New Deal Democrat in Republican clothing" when he won office in 1958, Rockefeller brought to government a grandiose—and ruinously costly—vision. Over nearly four full terms, he increased spending on the State University of New York tenfold, crafted the nation's most lavish Medicaid program, and poured billions into giant construction projects, including the pharaonic Empire State Mall in Albany. The state's budget skyrocketed more than fourfold to $8.7 billion in 1974 from $2 billion in 1958.

To pay for all this, Rockefeller raised taxes in eight of his 15 budgets, abandoned pay-as-you-go financing of capital projects, and piled up $11 billion in debt, saddling his successor with $264 million a year in debt service. He used public authorities to raise and spend money free of the state's own ballooning budget and outside the normal state bond processes. Cajoling, bullying, and horse-trading to get his way, Rockefeller earned the title "the one-man legislature."

WALTER SANDERS/TIME LIFE PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES

. . . and Thomas Dewey, a former prosecutor, . . .

Barely six months after Rocky resigned to take the nation's vice presidency, one of his authorities, the Urban Development Corporation, defaulted on its bonds, sparking a near bankruptcy in New York City, then groaning under the twin fiscal burdens of Rockefeller's state agenda and Mayor John Lindsay's vast expansion of social programs. Sharp cutbacks in state and city workers and services ensued, and the tough-minded governor who took office in 1975, Hugh Carey, pushed through such needed reforms as prohibiting authorities from issuing bonds not backed by a specific funding source. Still, Rockefeller's gigantic state apparatus had a

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momentum of its own, and Albany Republicans and Democrats alike had a stake in keeping it growing after the 1980s national boom provided fresh tax revenues.

To rein in Rockefeller's runaway government behemoth would have required sustained effort from more than one reform-minded governor. But after Carey, New York got instead two consecutive clunkers, Mario Cuomo and George Pataki, who for the past 22 years have allowed narrow but powerful special interests to run riot, making the Albany tax-and-spend machine careen ever faster.

Strange that despite his national reputation for soaring, visionary rhetoric, Mario Cuomo didn't know how to control his own Democratic caucus in Albany and quickly found legislative leaders dictating to him, wresting control of the budget process and presenting their own free-spending budget as a fait accompli. As the state slipped into recession in the late 1980s, Cuomo stood by and watched as the legislature raised taxes by more than $1 billion in each of three consecutive budgets—while the state's economy crumbled, accounting for nearly 30 percent of the nation's job losses during the recession that followed. When Cuomo claimed to be too busy to get involved in a contentious transit-funding issue, an exasperated New York City mayor Edward Koch sneered: "I mean, you have to be able to do more than chew gum." On Cuomo's watch, the state budget rocketed from $28 billion to $60 billion.

Little wonder that Republican George Pataki trounced Cuomo in 1994 on a platform of cutting taxes and spending—which in his first year he began to accomplish, after installing a supporter as head of the GOP-controlled senate and threatening upstate assembly Democrats with tough reelection fights if they didn't support his reform agenda. But when Pataki's political godfather, U.S. senator Alfonse D'Amato, decided to push the party to the left in a misguided and unsuccessful effort to save his own job, he left Pataki high and dry, and emboldened the Democratic-controlled assembly to resist the governor's agenda. Deflated, Pataki thereafter mostly drifted with the tax-and-spend flow.

So now the state totters once more on the brink of fiscal ruin, with Albany burning up money at an astounding pace, even though New Yorkers already pay 26 percent more of their personal income in taxes than the national average. New York is also the most heavily indebted state, to the tune of over $40 billion, costing taxpayers some $3 billion a year in interest. The shadow government of unaccountable authorities—now totaling an astounding 600 or more—has collectively amassed another $100 billion in debt, off the state books. Meanwhile, the state faces accumulated budget deficits of more than $10 billion over the next two years.

As a recent poll found, only 25 percent of New Yorkers have confidence in state government. With cynicism so high, New York has sunk to among the ten worst states for voter turnout. Instead, New Yorkers vote with their feet. From 1995 to 2000, New York lost about 1.6 million residents but attracted only 726,477 residents from other states—a loss of 874,248 and the greatest net domestic out-migration of any state.

Those who stay increasingly demand reform, to no avail: Albany legislators have insulated themselves from public accountability by gerrymandering their districts, so that nearly 98 percent of incumbents who have run for reelection over the last 15 years have won. The nonpartisan Center for Voting and Democracy ranks New York as the country's least democratic state.

Former mayor Koch tells a story that crystallizes the entrenched legislators' arrogant unconcern with the public interest. When Koch complained bitterly and publicly about a swollen pension hike that the legislature lavished on city employees, he recalls, "They sent [labor leader] Barry Feinstein to see me. He told me that there was nothing I could do to stop the bill, but that the legislators didn't like my publicly criticizing them. So he offered to reduce our costs by about $70 million by delaying the legislation for a few months and told me that I should take the offer, because there was nothing else I could do. I hated it, but I knew he was right. These guys are untouchable, so they do what they want to."

Even more arrogantly, New York's legislative leaders have now launched a power grab of breathtaking audacity, all the more galling be-

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cause it claims to be the reform that citizens crave. In an assault on the governor's prerogative, the legislature has proposed to give itself the right to set the state's fiscal priorities and dictate how the budget is shaped in any year in which the state does not pass a budget on time. Such legislation, of course, would encourage the legislature to stonewall the budget—as it does every year, anyway—so that it could invoke its new powers. It's unlikely, however, that increasingly disgusted voters will buy this ploy. "I think the voters are finally fed up and ready for reform," says Republican political consultant Jay Townsend. "I had a meeting with some legislators who asked me how I might run a campaign in New York, and I told them, 'I'd run against you guys and the way you do business up here.' That's what can work now."

"New Yorkers already pay 26 percent more of their personal income in taxes than the national average."

Eliot Spitzer's public statements make clear that he knows this. Accordingly, if he wants to govern successfully, like Dewey—and like Dewey reach for even higher office—he should campaign in a way that gives him a mandate for needed reform. Without credible opposition, without the political need to sell his soul to Democratic special-interest groups, ambitious, smart, and rich enough to resist corruption, Spitzer is ideally placed to run as a new broom who will sweep away Albany's costly and undemocratic conspiracy against the taxpayers. He can stress that he has not come up through the corrupting legislative ranks, dominated by free-spending representatives of public-sector unions and government-funded nonprofits. Though his judgment is not infalible, he can boast of having helped bust mob-run operations in the garment district and, like fellow prosecutor Rudy Giuliani, having blown the whistle on Wall Street wrongdoings. He can point to his drive, along with state comptroller Alan Hevesi, to scrutinize the state's hundreds of authorities and boards to make them more accountable. He would do well to step up this push now, to show just how serious he is about taking a fire hose to Albany and washing it clean.

Once in office, Spitzer could work miracles with only a few commonsensical measures. He would first of all have to use the power that a new governor wields within his own party to oust the current legislative leadership and install his own supporters. Since only the governor can submit a state budget, he will be able to set the agenda of how much money the state will spend—and on what. The legislature can participate in the budget process only by adding or reducing individual appropriations, and the governor can veto any of their individual changes without throwing out his entire budget. Spitzer can therefore cut back on the state's ruinous Medicaid spending—more than Number Two–ranked California's and Number Three–ranked Texas's *combined*—and he can push through a plan for a state takeover of the localities' share of Medicaid's cost, to discourage state legislators from profligately spending tax revenues that the localities currently have to collect. This crucial move will require a tough prosecutor's nerves of steel: when Westchester County executive Andrew Spano announced plans in November to inform county residents of just how much the state's Medicaid tab was costing them, powerful health-care union czar Dennis Rivera darkly hinted political consequences, and Spano quickly backed down.

Spitzer should then start consolidating the 64 mostly mediocre campuses of the state university system and making them accountable. He also needs to put the brakes on the state's budget-busting aid to local school districts, spiraling up at two to three times the rate of inflation.

Research for this article was supported by the Brunie Fund for New York Journalism.

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Though supporters argue that such aid holds down local tax increases, in fact municipalities usually raise taxes whether the state ponies up more aid or not. Finally, Spitzer needs to inject cost-saving competition into New York state government. One place to look is the free-spending Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which, despite big state and city subsidies, is bleeding red ink *and* soaking riders with ever higher fares. Transit systems around the country have lowered costs by bidding out everything from bus routes to operation of train systems. Not the MTA.

The governor must reject the fiscal gimmicks increasingly used to finance big spending hikes. He should prevent the funneling of more and more of the state's spending into off-budget accounts: for example, the 1999 Health Care Reform Act, financed by tobacco-settlement revenues, cigarette taxes, and surcharges on hospital bills that generate up to $2.5 billion a year in spending that does not appear on the official state budget, thus concealing the true size of the state's spending.

Like Dewey, Spitzer should slash the number of

AP WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

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. . . not of ineffective governors Mario Cuomo (above) and George Pataki (far left, with Alfonse D'Amato).

independent authorities, and make the borrowing and spending of those that remain subject to voter approval. Such authorities have "borrowed money to air-condition a Tonawanda golf dome, move 47 graves in a Dryden cemetery, open an Adirondack museum with a fake river and buy vans for a Brooklyn youth circus," the Syracuse *Post-Standard* reports—as well as to fund the yet-to-open National Museum of Catholic Art & History in East Harlem, not associated with the Catholic Church and run by an ex–Playboy bunny. Not surprisingly, these patronage mills have often been accused of nepotism, cronyism, and misspending funds. Audits of the former Harlem Urban Development Corporation found millions of dollars missing or squandered, for instance, and most recently, the New York Racing Association agreed to install a court-appointed monitor to settle federal charges of conspiracy to commit tax evasion.

Finally, Spitzer should campaign to strip the legislature of its power to redistrict itself and the state's congressional seats. New York needs a constitutional amendment to institute nonpartisan redistricting, as in Iowa or Arizona, where independent panels draw legislative districts objectively, without regard to political affiliation or incumbency. In Iowa, the process has produced districts of equal population and plain, rectangular boundaries that are among the most competitive in the country. And the state also needs vigorous ethics-rules reform for both legislators and lobbyists.

Whatever his message, Spitzer will probably win. The question he must ponder now is: Does he want to win—and govern—in a way that goes down in history? All New York will be hanging on his answer. ■

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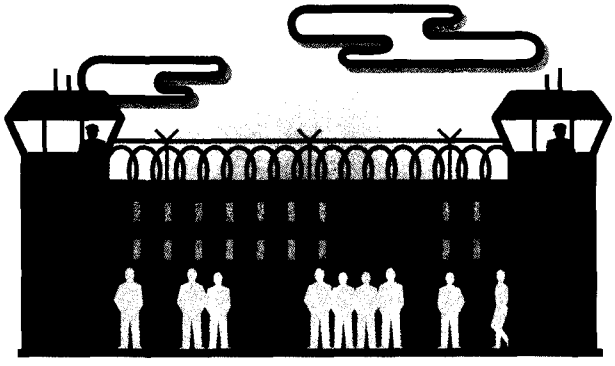
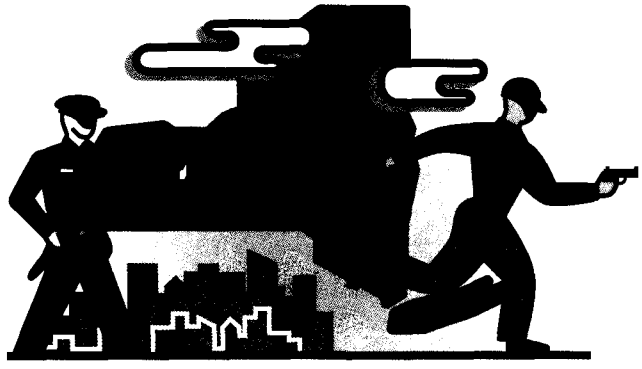
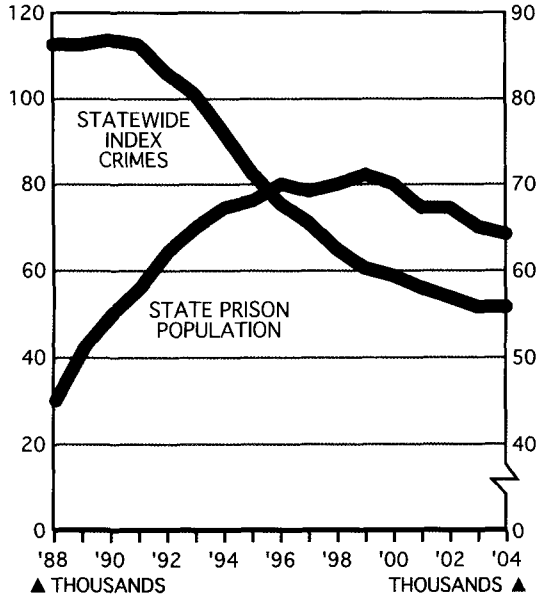
New York Crime Hits a Tipping Point





Crime and the New York State Prison Population



SOURCE: NEW YORK STATE DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES AND DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

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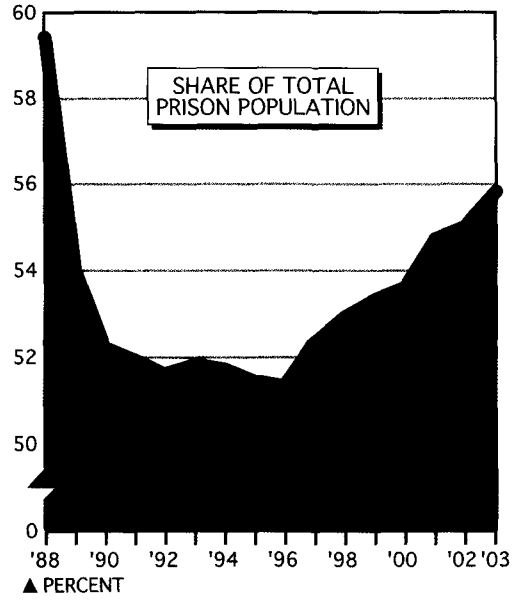
Violent Felons in New York State Prisons



SOURCE: NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

2

Graphs by Alberto Mena

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City Journal's Quality-of-Life Index shows that less crime leads to fewer prisoners.

E. J. McMahon

Reinforcing New York City's improved policing strategies in the 1990s were tougher sentencing laws and a significant expansion of the city and state correctional systems. Would-be criminals in the Big Apple came to realize that they were not only more likely to get caught, but more likely to end up serving hard time.

The results have been nothing less than spectacular: by one key measure, serious crime in the city has dropped 70 percent over the past 15 years.

But that success is also yielding another, less widely noticed, dividend: with felony arrests dropping as a result of the falling crime rate, New York's once-swollen city jails and state prisons are becoming less crowded. This has begun to generate hundreds of millions of dollars in annual savings for state and city taxpayers.

As Chart 1 shows, the number of state prison inmates rose steeply in the late 1980s, with major "index" crimes in New York State peaking in 1990. The prison population continued to rise for a few years even after the drop in crime began to accelerate rapidly in 1993.

The trend lines started moving in the same direction in the late 1990s. In 1997, the prison population—roughly two-thirds from New York City—dipped slightly for the first time in 25 years. It rose again slightly in the two succeeding years, then began a five-year decline in 2000. The December 2004 population of just over 64,000 inmates was 10 percent below the 1999 peak of 71,431.

Nearly three-quarters of this decrease has consisted of nonviolent offenders, more than half of whom were serving drug-related sentences. Even before the recently enacted amendments to New York's tough Rockefeller drug laws, the state was channeling more nonviolent offenders into

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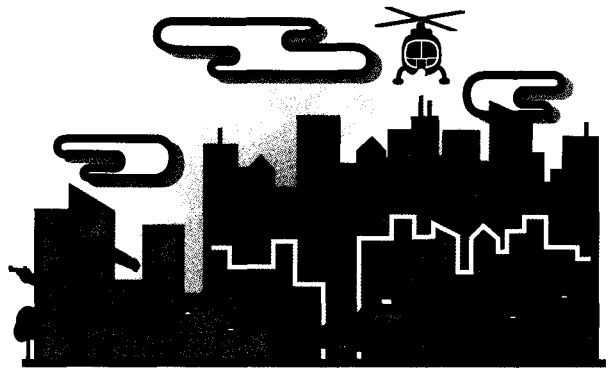
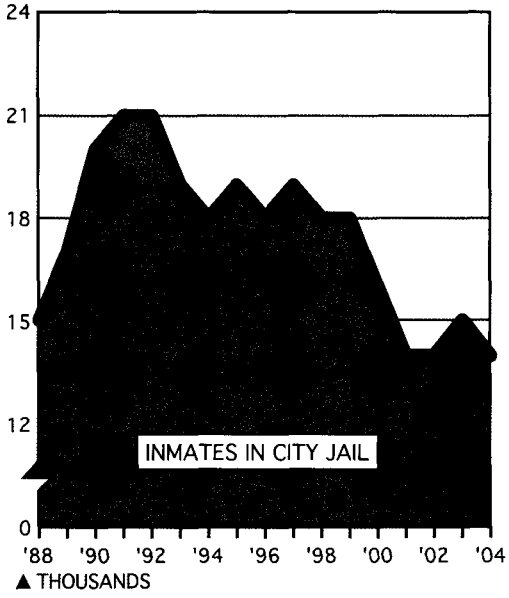


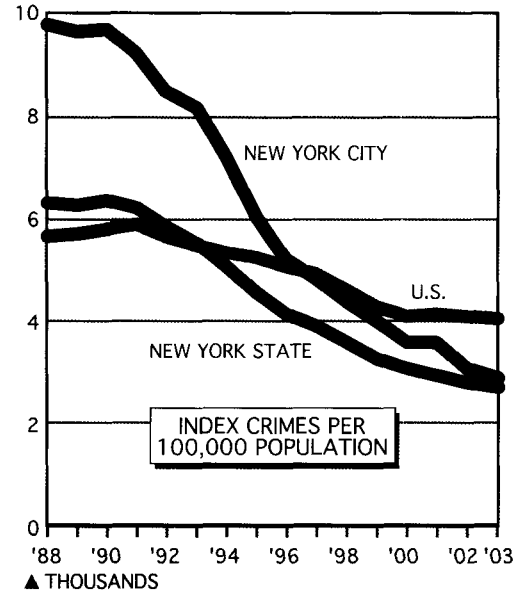
New York City Jail
Average Daily Population



SOURCE: NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

3

Crime Rates,
1988–2003



SOURCE: FBI UNIFORM CRIME REPORTS AND NEW YORK STATE DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES

4

treatment programs, work release, or "shock incarceration"—a form of behavior-modifying boot camp. As a result, a growing share of the remaining inmates are violent offenders, as Chart 2 shows. And in the wake of sentencing reforms enacted under Governor George Pataki, violent felons have been serving more time (26 months more, on average). Recidivism—the rate at which ex-cons return to prison within three years of their release—has decreased by about 16 percent during the 1990s.

Compared with the state prison population, New York City's jail population peaked earlier, in 1992, and has dropped even further in recent years. By the end of 2004, the daily count of city inmates was below 14,000, about a third

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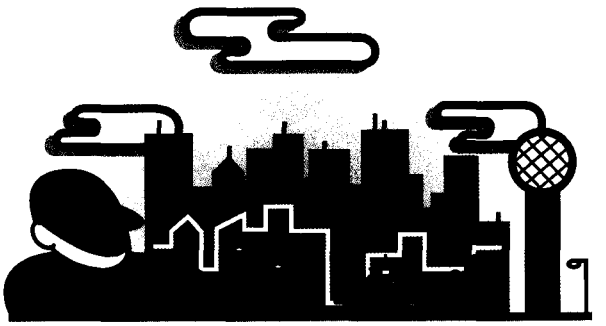
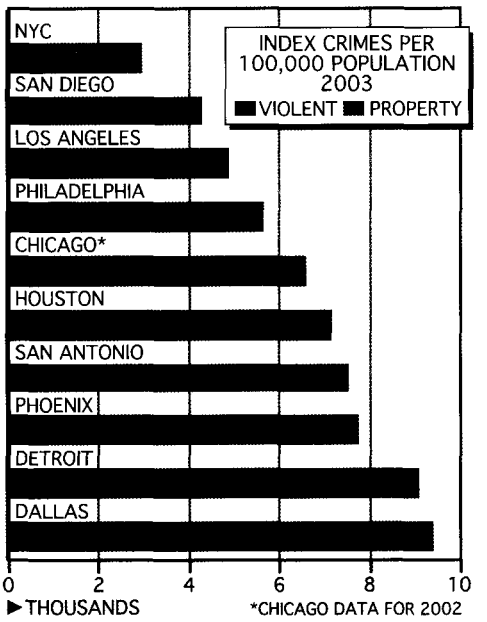


Crime in Major Cities



SOURCE: FBI, *CRIME IN THE UNITED STATES, 2003*

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below its 1992 peak of 21,000, as Chart 3 shows. This was, in part, a ripple effect of the state's prison expansion—for the construction of more cells upstate meant that fewer convicted "state-ready" felons had to be held at Rikers Island.

The decreasing jail population has enabled the city to close its detention facilities in Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx, to close some wings in other facilities, and to reduce the headcount of jail employees, saving at least $185 million a year in staff costs alone. The city corrections budget has declined nearly 8 percent in the last three years.

At the state level, the number of corrections officers has decreased by about 1,500 since 2000, generating a wage-and-benefit savings of roughly $120 million a year. So far, however, the state legislature has blocked greater operational savings by refusing to accept Pataki's plans to close several prisons, which poorer upstate communities view as a jobs program. Given the state's huge budget gap and the continuing decline in the prison population, the fight over excess prison space should intensify in the year ahead.

Nationally, the number of criminals behind bars continues to grow. Only a handful of states managed to reduce prison populations over the past few years—and New York is one of only two to report fewer inmates in 2003 than in 1995, according to federal data. While the size and average age of a state's young male "cohort" plays an important role here, Gotham's exceptionally large reduction in crime has surely influenced the downward trend. Near the height of the crack epidemic in 1988, New York City's total crime rate was 73 percent above the national rate. By 2003, it was 28 percent below average. The plunge in city crime also pulled the statewide crime rate below the national average, as Chart 4 shows.

In 2003, New York continued to reduce its crime rate at more than five times the national pace. Thanks largely to its very low rate of "property" crimes (burglaries, larcenies, and car thefts), New York City's overall crime rate is much lower than that of other major cities, as Chart 5 shows. However, among the ten largest cities, violent crime in New York is still higher than in San Diego, Phoenix, and San Antonio.

For years, the Left has warned that tougher sentencing would create a syndrome of "mass incarceration" and the creation of a "prison-industrial complex." But as the New York experience shows, the crackdown has worked on more than one level. Good policing and tough sentencing have pushed New York to a tipping point, deterring some potential malefactors from crime. Now, if crime goes down and stays down, the prison population should keep dropping as well.

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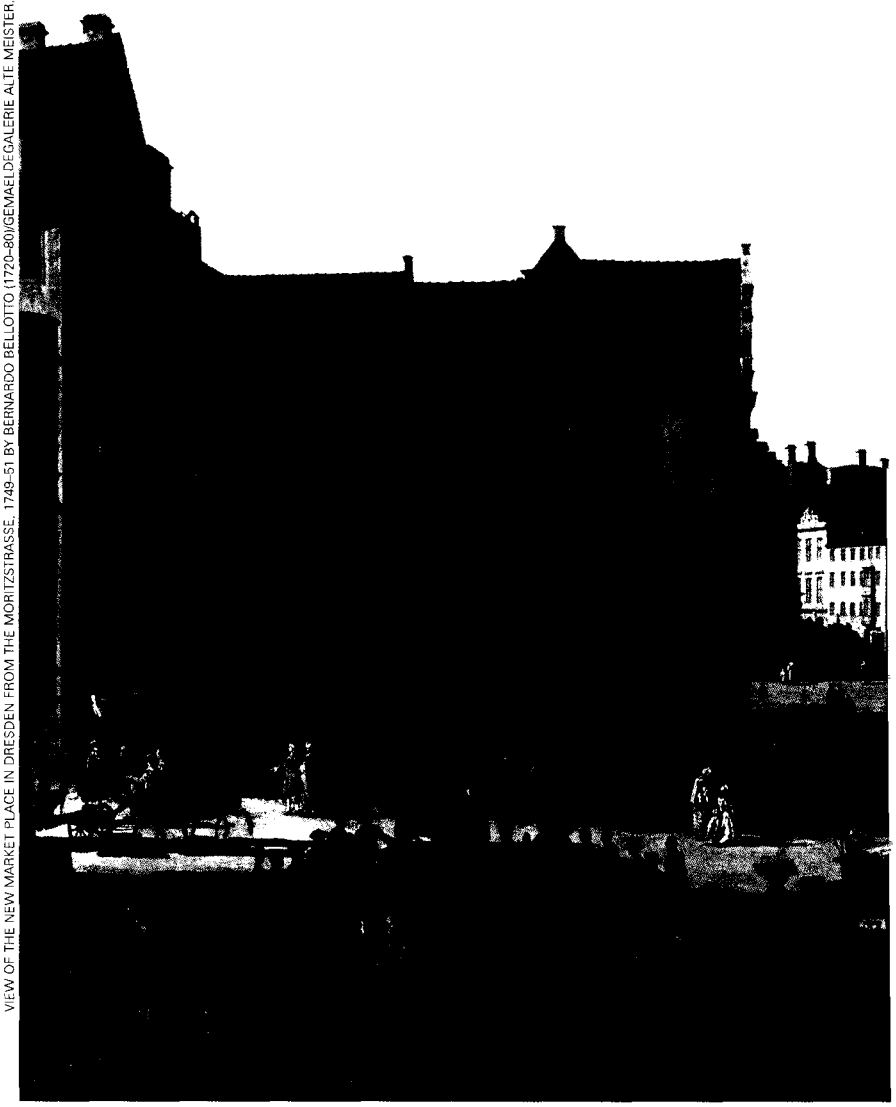
The Specters Haunting Dresden

Theodore Dalrymple

The foundations of Hitler's bunker were uncovered during the building frenzy in Berlin that followed the reunification of Germany. An anguished debate ensued about what to do with the site, for in Germany both memory and amnesia are dangerous, each with its moral hazards. To mark the bunker's site might turn it into a place of pilgrimage for neo-Nazis, resurgent in the East; not to mark it might be regarded as an attempt to deny the past. In the end, anonymous burial was deemed the better, which is to say the safer, option.

Nowhere in the world (except, perhaps, in Israel or Russia) does history weigh as heavily, as palpably, upon ordinary people as in Germany. Sixty years after the end of the Second World War, the disaster of Nazism is still unmistakably and inescapably inscribed upon almost every town and cityscape, in whichever direction you look. The urban environment of Germany, whose towns and cities were once among the most beautiful in the world, second only to Italy's, is now a wasteland of functional yet discordant modern architecture, soulless and incapable of inspiring anything but a vague existential unease, with a sense



VIEW OF THE NEW MARKET PLACE IN DRESDEN FROM THE MORITZSTRASSE, 1749–51 BY BERNARDO BELLOTTO (1720–80)/GEMAELDEGALERIE ALTE MEISTER, DRESDEN, GERMANY/BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

Beautiful Renaissance Dresden, . . .

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of impermanence and unreality that mere prosperity can do nothing to dispel. Well-stocked shops do not supply meaning or purpose. Beauty, at least in its man-made form, has left the land for good; and such remnants of past glories as remain serve only as a constant, nagging reminder of what has been lost, destroyed, utterly and irretrievably smashed up.

Nor are the comforts of victimhood available to the Germans as they survey the devastation of their homeland. Walking with the widow of a banker through the one small square in Frankfurt that has been restored to its medieval splendor, I remarked how beautiful a city Frankfurt must once have been, and how terrible it was that such beauty should have been lost forever.

"We started it," she said. "We got what we deserved."

But who was this "we" of whom she spoke? She was not of an age to have helped or even to have supported the Nazis, and therefore (if justice requires that each should get his desert) it was unjust that she should bear the guilty burden of the past. And Germans far younger than she still bear it. I went to dinner with a young businessman, born 20 years after the end of the war, who told me that the forestry company for which he worked, and which had interests in Britain, had decided that it needed a mission statement. A meeting ensued, and someone suggested *Holz mit Stolz* ("wood with pride"), whereupon a two-hour discussion erupted among the employees of the company as to whether pride in anything was permitted to the Germans, or whether it was the beginning of the slippery slope that led to . . . well, everyone knew where. The businessman found this all perfectly normal, part of being a contemporary German.

Collective pride is denied the Germans because, if pride is taken in the achievements of one's national ancestors, it follows that shame for what they have done must also be accepted. And the shame of German history is greater than any cultural achievement, not because that achievement fails to balance the shame, but because it is more recent than any achievement, and furthermore was committed by a generation either still living or still existent well within living memory.

The moral impossibility of patriotism worries Germans of conservative instinct or temperament. Upon what in their historical tradition can they safely look back as a guide or a help? One young German conservative historian I met took refuge in Anglophilia—his England, of course, being an England of the past. He needed a refuge, because Hitler and Nazism had besmirched everything in his own land. The historiography that sees in German history nothing but a prelude to Hitler and Nazism may be intellectually unjustified, the product of the historian's bogus authorial omniscience, but it has emotional and psychological force nonetheless, precisely because the willingness to take pride in the past implies a preparedness to accept the shame of it. Thus Bach and Beethoven can be celebrated, but not as Germans; otherwise they would be tainted. The young German historian worked for a publishing house with a history lasting almost four centuries, but its failure to go out of business during the 12 years of the Third Reich cast a shadow both forward and backward, like a spectral presence that haunts a great mansion.

The impossibility of patriotism does not extinguish the need to belong, however. No man is, or can be, an island; everyone, no matter how egotistical, needs to belong to a collectivity larger than himself. A young German once said to me, "I don't feel German, I feel European." This sounded false to my ears: it had the same effect upon me as the squeal of chalk on a blackboard, and sent a shiver down my spine. One might as well say, "I don't feel human, I feel mammalian." We do not, and cannot, feel all that we are: so that while we who live in Europe are European, we don't feel European.

In any case, can a German feel European unilaterally, without the Portuguese (for example) similarly and reciprocally feeling European rather than Portuguese? From my observations of the French, they still feel French, indeed quite

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strongly so. Nearly half a century after the Treaty of Rome, they can't be said to like the Germans; to think otherwise is to mistake a marriage of convenience for the passion of Romeo and Juliet.

A common European identity therefore has to be forged deliberately and artificially; and one of the imperatives for attempting to do so is the need of Germans for an identity that is not German (the other, which dovetails neatly, is the French drive to recover world power). And since the Germans are very powerful in Europe, by weight of their economy, their need to escape from themselves by absorbing everyone into a new collective identity will sooner or later be perceived in the rest of Europe as the need to impose themselves—as a return to their bad old habits. New identities can indeed be forged, but usually in the crucible of war or at least of social upheaval: not, in the context, an inviting prospect.

On no city does history weigh heavier than on Dresden. It is 60 years in February 2005 since the bombing that forever changed the basis of the city's renown. Overnight, the Florence of the Elbe became a perpetual monument to destruction from the air, famed for its rubble and its corpses rather than its baroque architecture and its devotion to art. And then came communism.

You meet people in Dresden who, until a few years ago, knew nothing but life under Hitler, Ulbricht, and Honecker. Truly the sins of their fathers were visited upon them, for they brought neither the Nazis nor the communists to power, and there was nothing they could do to escape them. For such people, the sudden change in 1990 was both liberation and burden. Avid to see a world that was previously forbidden them, they took immediate advantage of their new freedom to visit the farthest corners of the globe, the more exotic the better. But the liberation brought with it a heightened awareness of the man-made desert of their own pasts, seven-eighths of their lives, truly an expense of spirit in a waste of shame. Never was Joy's grape burst more decisively against veil'd Melancholy's palate fine.

A decade and a half, and untold billions of deutsche marks and euros later, Dresden is still incompletely Westernized. Its unemployment rate is three times that of Germany as a whole, so high in fact that all the city dwellers I met believed the official figures to be manipulated downward, for propaganda purposes: it being inconceivable to them, as the result of long and incontrovertible experience, that any government would tell the truth about anything. And while some parts of the city have taken on the feverish vulgarity that for so many people in the modern world is the manifestation, prerequisite, and only meaning and value of freedom, others still have that disintegrating deadness peculiar to communism, where paint flakes and stucco crumbles, where stale smells always linger in stairwells, and electric light casts a yellowing gloom the color of cheap paper that has aged.

Not all Dresden was bombed, of course; on the banks of the Elbe there are still the magnificent villas of the haute bourgeoisie. Some of them have been bought and restored by rich "Wessis," as the inhabitants of the former West Germany are still, not altogether affectionately, known; but others remain unrestored, uninhabited, and deteriorating, at night appearing unlit, like the set of a Gothic horror movie. One expects bats or vampires to emerge. For more than 40 years, they were the homes of Dresden "workers of the brain" (to use communist terminology), but such was their dilapidation that, immediately after reunification, they were declared unfit for habitation according to the standards of the West, and their residents moved elsewhere.

To the moral complications of a Nazi past were added those of a communist past, the greatest of which was an awareness of just how widespread the practice of denunciation had been. On some estimates, a sixth of the population of the former German Democratic Republic were *Mitarbeiter*—collaborators with the secret police, the Stasi—and had spied upon and denounced their neighbors, friends, relatives, and even spouses. Once the archives opened and people could read their security

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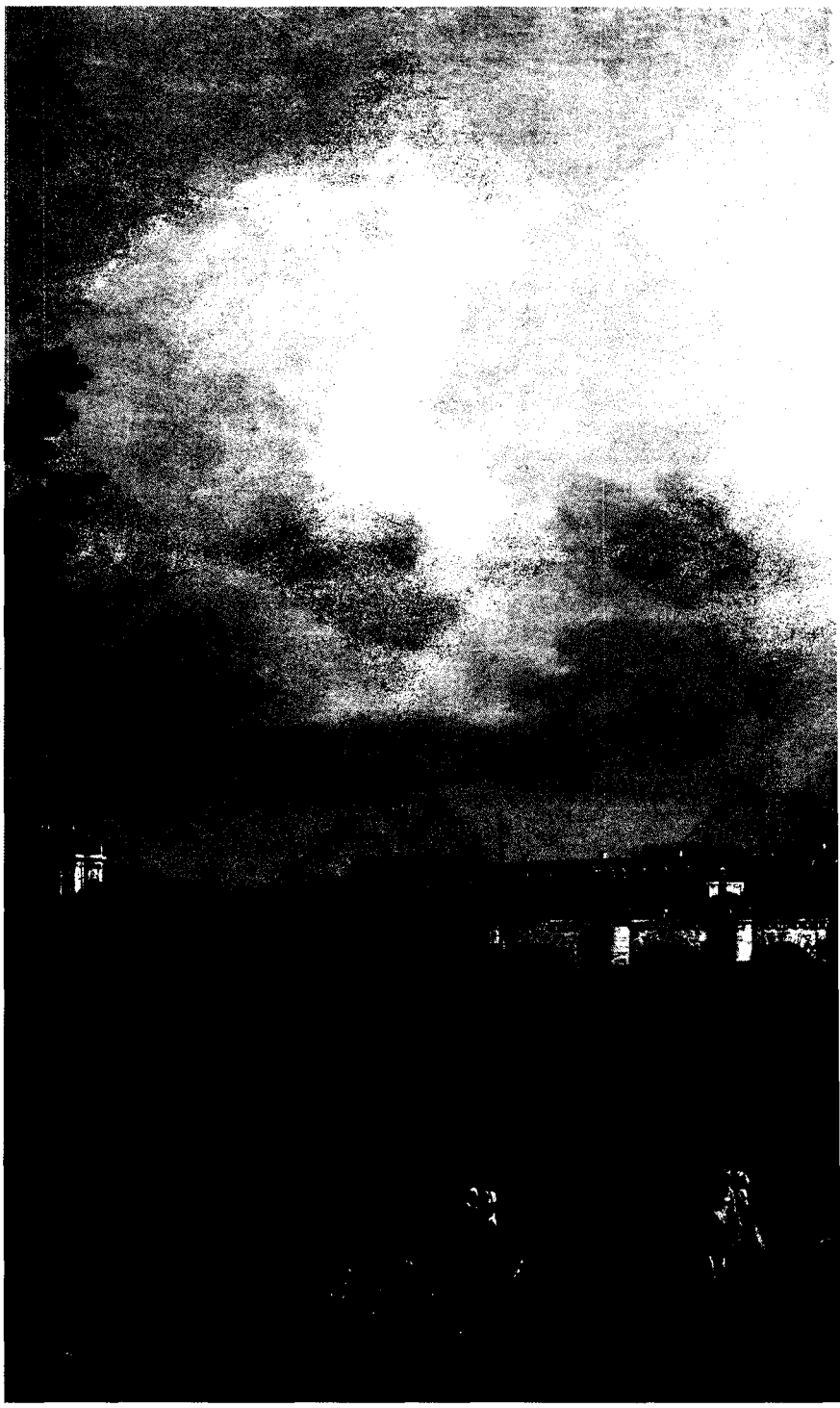
dossiers for themselves, they discovered in many cases that those to whom they had relayed their private thoughts had relayed them in turn to the Stasi, in return, practically, for nothing except the informer's satisfaction of being on the right side of the powerful. Those whom people had thought were their best friends turned out to be the very ones whose denunciation had resulted in their otherwise inexplicable failure to gain promotion in their work, sometimes for decades. Such discoveries were not conducive to a favorable or optimistic view of human nature or the trust upon which a secure social life is built. The GDR, founded on a political theory that made a fetish of human solidarity, turned everyone into an atom in the asocial ether.

The destruction of Dresden on the night of February 13, 1945, by the Royal Air Force, and on the following two days by the U.S. Army Forces, necessitated the rebuilding of the city, with only a small area around the famous Zwinger restored to its former glory. Dresden had been all but destroyed once before, by the armies of Frederick the Great (if Frederick was enlightened, give me obscurantism); but at least he replaced the Renaissance city recorded in the canvases of Bellotto by a baroque one, not by a wilderness of totalitarian functionalism whose purpose was to stamp out all sense of



VIEW OF DRESDEN FROM THE RIGHT BANK OF THE RIVER ELBE, 1748 BY BERNARDO BELLOTTO (1720–80)/GEMAELDEGALERIE ALTE MEISTER, DRESDEN, GERMANY/BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

. . . known as the Florence of the Elbe, . . .

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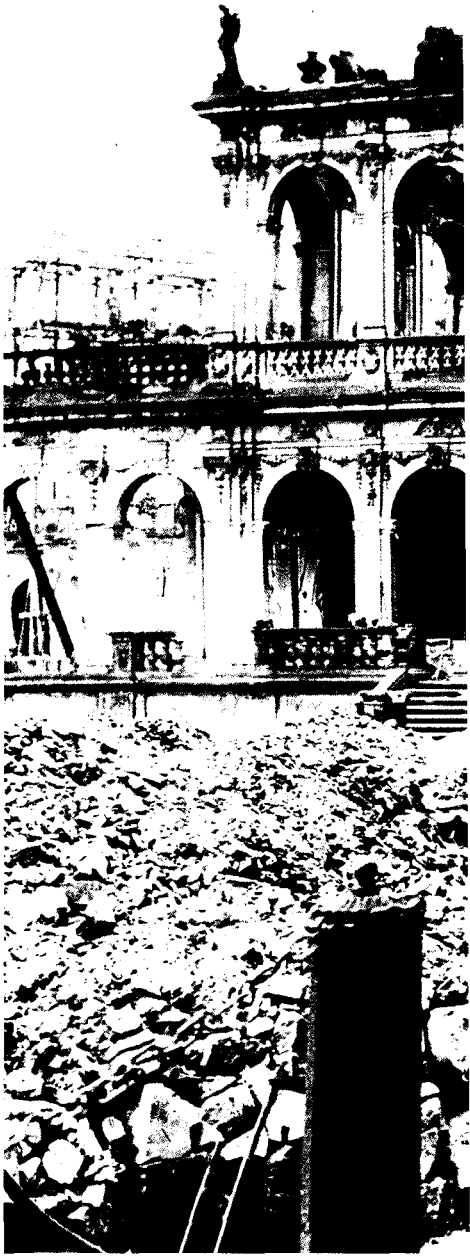
individuality and to emphasize the omnipresent might of the state. The bombing of Dresden was a convenient pretext to do what communists (and some others) like to do in any case: the systematization of Bucharest during Ceauşescu's rule, or the replacement of the medieval city of Ales, 25 miles from my house in France, by mass housing of hideous inhumanity on the orders of the communist city council, being but two cases in point.

Despite this, the communists made use of the destruction of Dresden for propaganda purposes throughout the four decades of their rule. The church bells of the city tolled on every anniversary of the bombing, for the 20 minutes that it took the RAF to unload the explosives that created the firestorm that turned the Florence of the Elbe into a smoking ruin as archaeological as Pompeii. "See what the capitalist barbarians did," was the message, "and what they would do again if they had the chance and if we did not arm ourselves to the teeth." Needless to say, the rapine of the Red Army went strictly unmentioned.

But the bombing caused some unease in Britain even at the time. Was it justified? The issue of the war, after all, was by then hardly in doubt; and, in any case, both the ethics and efficacy of bombing civilian areas had been questioned, not only by left-wing politicians and George Bell, bishop of Chichester, but by the air-force commanders themselves. A debate has simmered ever since, occasionally coming to a boil, as when a statue commemorating the head of the RAF's Bomber Command, Arthur Harris, was unveiled in London in 1992 or, more recently, when the Queen paid a state visit to Germany and failed to utter an apology for the bombing.

I don't think any decent, civilized person can look at pictures of Dresden after the bombing without being overcome by a sense of shock. The jagged ruins of walls emerging from fields of rubble, as far as the eye can see or the camera record, are a testament, of a kind, to human ingenuity. Only the long development of science and knowledge could have achieved this. As for the funeral pyres of bodies, piled up with their legs and arms emerging from the mass, or the corpses of the people boiled alive in the fountains in which they had taken refuge . . . one averts not only one's eyes, but one's thoughts.

Yet the idea sometimes propounded by those who seek to condemn the bombing as an atrocity equal to, and counterbalancing, Nazi atrocities—that Dresden was some kind of city of the innocents, concerned only with the arts and having nothing to do with the war effort, cut off from and morally superior to the rest of Nazi Germany—is clearly absurd. It is in the nature of totalitarian regimes that no such innocence should persist anywhere; and it certainly didn't in Dresden



THE GRANGER COLLECTION

in 1945. For example, the Zeiss-Ikon optical group alone employed 10,000 workers (and some forced labor), all engaged—of course—in war work. Nor had Dresden's

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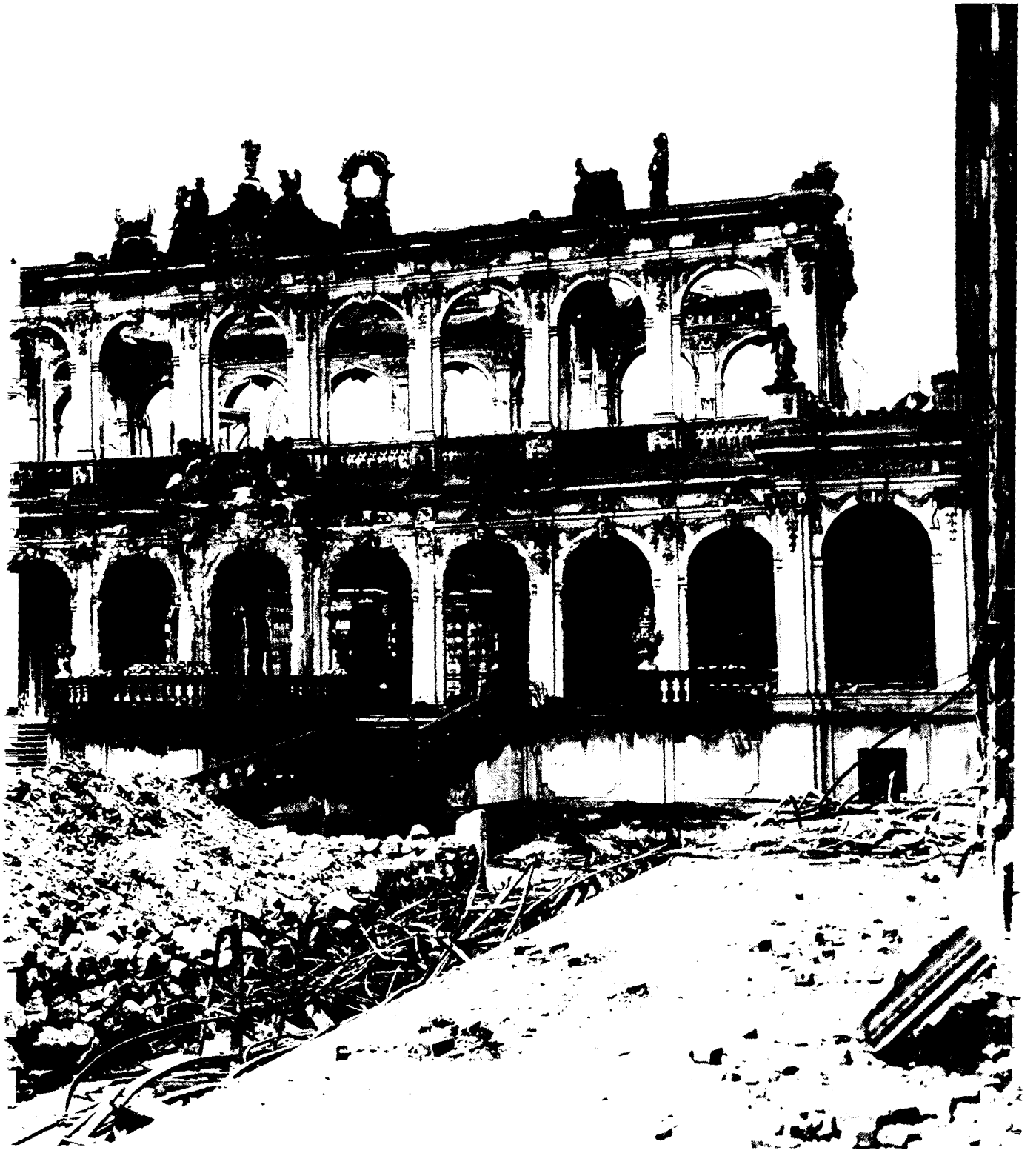

. . . crumbled under Allied bombing in 1945.

record been very different from the rest of Germany's. Its synagogue was burned down during the orchestrated Kristallnacht of November 1938; the Gauleiter of Saxony, who had his seat in Dresden, was the notoriously brutal and corrupt Martin Mutschmann. The bombing saved the life of at least one man, the famous diarist Victor Klemperer, one of the 197 Jews still alive in the city (out of a former population of several thousand). He and the handful of remaining Jews had been marked down for deportation and death two

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days after the bombing; in the chaos after the bombing, he was able to escape and tear the yellow star from his coat.

Eighteen years after the end of the war, in 1963, the pro-Nazi historian David Irving published his first book, *The Destruction of Dresden*. In those days, he was either less pro-Nazi than he later became or more circumspect—the memory of the war still being fresh—but it was probably not entirely a coincidence that he devoted his first attention to an event that Churchill suspected might be a blot on the British escutcheon. However, Irving—later a leading Holocaust denier, who lost a famous libel suit against a historian who exposed him as such—clearly accepted in 1963 that there had been a Nazi genocide against the Jews, and he ended his book with an admission that the bombing (which he called "the biggest single massacre in European history") was "carried out in the cause of bringing to their knees a people who, corrupted by Nazism, had committed the greatest crimes against humanity in recorded time."

There were faint signs of Irving's later acceptance of the Nazi worldview in this book, though they probably went unnoticed at the time. Describing the state of medical services in Dresden after the bombing, he mentioned that "a vast euthanasia-hospital for mentally incurables" was transformed into a hospital for the wounded, without any remark upon the very concept of a "euthanasia-hospital for mentally incurables": an institution that by itself would be sufficient to negate one meaning of his ambiguous description of Dresden in a chapter heading as "The Virgin Target." (Did he mean that it had never yet been attacked, or that the city was an innocent virgin?)

Of course, it would be absurd to pretend that the bombing of Dresden was conducted in order to put an end to the evil of its "euthanasia-hospital," however vast, or to rescue Victor Klemperer from certain death. Among other motives for bombing, no doubt, was the need to demonstrate to the advancing Russians the tremendous firepower of the West, despite its relative weakness in land armies.

Irving's book was influential, however, precisely because he hid, or had not yet fully developed, his Nazi sympathies. It achieved its greatest influence through *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Kurt Vonnegut's famous countercultural antiwar novel, published six years later, which makes grateful acknowledgment of Irving's book, whose inflated estimate of the death toll of the bombing it unquestioningly accepts. Vonnegut, an American soldier who was a prisoner of war in Dresden at the time of the bombing, having been captured during the land offensive in the west, writes of the war and the bombing itself as if it took place in no context, as if it were just an arbitrary and absurd quarrel between rivals, between Tweedledum and Tweedledee, with no internal content or moral meaning—a quarrel that nevertheless resulted in one of the rivals cruelly and thoughtlessly destroying a beautiful city of the other.

But Vonnegut, to whom it did not occur that his subject matter was uniquely unsuited to facetious, adolescent literary experimentation, was writing an antiwar tract in the form of a postmodern novel, not a historical reexamination of the bombing of Dresden or of Germany as a whole. The problem that has bedeviled any such re-examination is fear that sympathy for the victims, or regret that so much of aesthetic and cultural value was destroyed, might be taken as sympathy for Nazism itself. The difficulty of disentangling individual from collective responsibility for the evils perpetrated by the Nazi regime is unresolved even now, and perhaps is inherently unresolvable.

True, Hitler was immensely popular; on the other hand, he never won a majority of the votes in anything that resembled a free election, and public enthusiasm in dictatorships cannot be taken entirely at face value (in his diaries, Klemperer himself veers between thinking that most Germans were Nazis and that the enthusiasm was bogus and more or less forced). The Germans entered into the spirit of violence and denunciation with a will, but on the

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other hand intimidation was everywhere. A witness to the burning of the Dresden synagogue on Kristallnacht who was overheard publicly to liken it to the worst times of the Middle Ages was seized by the Gestapo and taken away: an object lesson to all those *who saw or learned about* his fate. And those who say that Nazism was the inevitable consummation of German history, inherent in all that had gone before, must explain why so many German Jews (my grandfather among them, a major in the imperial German army during the Great War) were deeply and patriotically attached to both the country and its culture, and why so many of them were so blind for so long. Their lack of foresight is surely as eloquent as the historian's hindsight.

By the end of the war, 600,000 Germans had been killed by the bombing campaign, and a third of the population rendered homeless. Yet when the war was over, none among the many millions affected could express his grief and despair openly, for to have done so would have rendered him open to the charge of Nazi sympathies. The East Germans could toll the bells for Dresden each anniversary of the bombing only because the government enforced the myth that all the Nazis originated from, and were now located in, West Germany. But normal, personal, unideological grief was not permitted.

W. G. Sebald, an expatriate German author who lived in England, where he died in a car crash in 2001, pointed out a curious lacuna in German literature of memoirs or fictional accounts of the bombing and its aftereffects. Millions suffered terribly, yet there is *hardly a memoir or a novel to* record it. Anything other than silence about what they experienced would have seemed, and still would seem, indecent and highly suspect, an attempt to establish a moral equivalence between the victims and perpetrators of Nazism.

Foreigners, such as the Swedish writer Stig Dagerman, could write about the sufferings of the Germans immediately after the war, but not the Germans themselves. Victor Gollancz, a British publisher of Polish-Jewish origin who could not be suspected in the slightest of Nazi sympathies and who had spent the entire 1930s publishing books warning the world of the Nazi peril, wrote and published a book in the immediate aftermath of the war called *In Darkest Germany*, in which he drew attention to the plight of the Germans living (and starving) among the ruins, which he observed on a visit there. To the charge that the Germans had brought it all on themselves and deserved no less, he replied with a three-word question: "And the children?" His book was furnished with many affecting pictures, perhaps the most poignant among them that of the comfortably attired Gollancz lifting the foot of a little German boy to demonstrate his pitiful footwear to the camera.

But for several decades, it was impermissible for Germans to allude publicly to their own sufferings of the period, much of which must have been *innocent, unless it be considered* that all Germans were equally guilty *ex officio*, as it were. No doubt the impermissibility of publicly expressed complaint, and therefore of resentment, was a powerful stimulus of the *Wirtschaftswunder*, the economic miracle, into which the Germans in the West threw their potentially resentful energies after the war, for lack of anywhere else to direct them. But this left a legacy of deep emptiness that all the reflective Germans I have met seem to feel. Perhaps it explains also the German longing to travel, greater than that of any other nation I know.

In the last few years, best-selling books have begun to appear in Germany to record the suffering of the Germans during and after the war. Is this dangerous self-pity an implicit national self-exculpation? Or is it a sign of health, that at last Germans can approach their own past unencumbered by the psychological complexes bequeathed to them by their parents and grandparents?

As I walked through Dresden, I lamented the loss of an incomparable city, while thinking how difficult it must be to be a German, for whom neither memory nor amnesia can provide consolation.

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A Murderess's Tale

Theodore Dalrymple

It is a fiction—a socially necessary one, perhaps, but a fiction nonetheless—that all murderers are created equal. They are not. Though murder is the worst crime, murderers are not necessarily the worst criminals. In fact, contact with many of them has taught me that it is possible to abominate the crime without always abominating the criminal.

Man being a fallen creature, momentary and uncharacteristic lapses do occur. Moreover, the law's doctrine that provocation or duress can only count as an exculpating excuse if it has immediately preceded the crime is psychologically unrealistic, though it is perhaps another socially necessary fiction. Many a straw, after all, has broken many a camel's back; and sometimes I have found myself thinking, when listening to a murderer, that I am not sure that I would have acted so very differently had I been in his place.

Moreover, murderers are of all criminals the most prone to genuine remorse and self-reproach. Burglars rarely reproach themselves; rather, they are full of condemnation of others, from parents and police to physicians and politicians. But even murderers whose whole lives have, in retrospect, been but a preamble to murder experience a change of heart once they have killed. Their murder acts on them like a religious conversion (to which, indeed, it is sometimes a prelude); and while some killers remain psychopathically indifferent to their crimes, they are relatively few. I have met Hannibal Lecter types, but not often.

Every murder raises deep and disturbing questions, philosophical, psychological, and sociological: none more so than one in which I recently gave testimony in court. The accused was a girl aged 18, who had stabbed her 16-year-old lesbian lover to death. There could be no doubt as to who had inflicted the fatal wounds: a tape from a closed-circuit camera in the entrance hall of the accused's apartment building showed her following her lover out of the building with a long knife in each hand, raised ready to stab, as in a too-melodramatic rendition of Lady Macbeth.

Under English law, then, only two defenses were left to her: insanity or diminished responsibility. There was no question of insanity, however. She was not, nor did she claim to be, mad. Her lawyer argued for diminished responsibility, a plea that would have made her guilty of the lesser crime of manslaughter, rather than murder. While murder carries a mandatory life sentence, manslaughter allows the judge considerable discretion as to sentence: anything from an unconditional release to life in prison. The verdict is therefore worth arguing for.

But what is diminished responsibility? The Homicide Act of 1957 introduced it as a defense to the charge of murder, as a compromise with those who wished to abolish the death penalty altogether (as was enacted nine years later). The act states that a person is guilty of manslaughter, not murder, if he suffered at the time from a state of mind that substantially impaired his mental responsibility for his actions. As to what constitutes such a state of mind, a judge ruled that it was a state so different from a normal state of mind that an ordinary person—that is to say, a member of a jury—would accept it as such. But while it is for a jury to decide the question, in practice medical evidence plays a decisive role. In this case, I appeared for the prosecution: though, as I shall explain, with a heavy heart.

On the day in question, the perpetrator and her victim, who had spent the night together, rose at about one in the afternoon. This was perfectly normal for them: they were both unemployed, and they had spent the evening before (as they always did) drinking to excess and smoking marijuana. Once they had risen, the victim went to the nearest store to buy more alcohol, in the form of cheap, strong cider, sold in two- or three-liter bottles to alcoholics—no one else drinks it.

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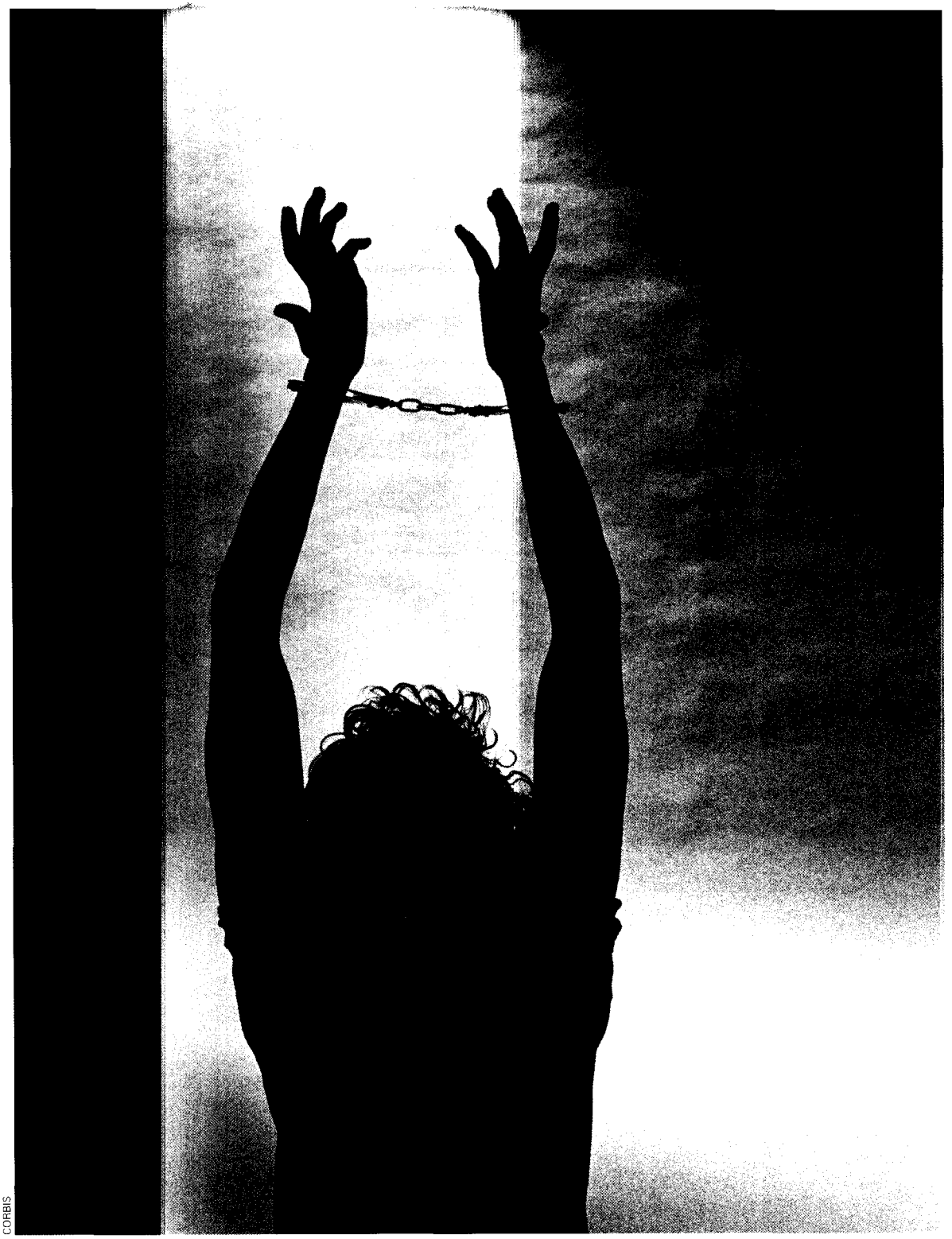

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They spent the afternoon drinking and smoking more marijuana together. Then, as so often happens when people combine drugs and alcohol, an argument broke out between them. Participants describe such arguments as existing independently of those who have them—more like a meteorological phenomenon than a human one. As the accused put it, the argument got out of hand, though she could not remember exactly, or even approximately, what it was about. She went to the kitchen to fetch a knife (actually, two knives) and then returned to her lover. Her intention, as she remembered it, was to

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encourage her to leave the apartment, which she did. Unfortunately, very shortly afterward, the accused followed her, and the rest was homicide. The killer called for an ambulance, and her teenage lover all but bled to death in her arms. Her last words were "It hurts" and "I'm tired."

Relations between the victim and perpetrator, which had begun three years earlier, since they were 13 and 15, respectively, had always been difficult, with many drug- and alcohol-fueled quarrels, often ending up with the waving of knives and other weapons. The victim's mother said that she had always thought it would end in murder.

The issue in court was whether the killer had what is known in our over-medicalized world as a personality disorder, or what used to be called a bad character. The World Health Organization defines personality disorders as "extreme or significant deviations from the way the average individual in a given culture perceives, thinks, feels and, particularly, relates to others. Such behavior patterns tend to be stable and to encompass multiple domains of behavior and psychological functioning. They are frequently, but not always, associated with various degrees of subjective distress and problems of social performance." The diagnosis thus rests upon vague criteria, of doubtful validity; but it makes sense, more or less, in practice.

If the accused had such a disorder, and her actions could plausibly be attributed to it, the defense might argue that she therefore did indeed have diminished responsibility for her actions: for it is accepted without argument today that a man is not in the least responsible for his own personality or character—a far cry from Marcus Aurelius's view 2,000 years ago that a man could, and ought to, cultivate his own character.

The use of personality disorder in such cases seems to me to be little else than a thin or even frivolous pretext for leniency, for if the argument were taken seriously it would lead to *more* severe punishment rather than less. If a man kills as a result of a momentary but understandable lapse, in unusual circumstances, he is guilty of murder but is unlikely to kill again; if a man kills because his character is deficient, and it is therefore the kind of thing he does, he is guilty of manslaughter but, *ex hypothesi*, is likely to do it again.

Not long ago, I testified in a case in which personality disorder served as an illogical pretext for leniency. A woman in her early forties, an alcoholic, had married another alcoholic and had a child by him. The father subsequently gave up drinking, separated from his wife—who continued to drink—and came to the conclusion that she was not a suitable mother for his child. He was in the process of applying for custody.

By now, the child was two years old. One day, the mother—probably drunk—dissolved the contents of her antidepressant capsules in some cough medicine and injected the solution into the child's mouth with a syringe. The child died as a result.

Against my arguments, the jury accepted that her supposed personality disorder had diminished her responsibility, and the judge sentenced her to three years' probation (she had already spent a year in prison by the time the case came to court). Oddly enough, in arguing that she was guilty of the more serious crime of murder rather than the less serious one of manslaughter, I was also arguing that she was less dangerous in the future than her own defense implied. I strongly suspect that, while drunk, she had said to herself something like, "If I can't have my child, no one else will," and had resorted to the pills with the very kind of premeditation that makes someone guilty of murder (the dissolution of her capsules and her administration of them to her daughter could hardly have been the result of a momentary lapse, after all). But since she was unlikely ever to have another child, she posed little further danger to society: the circumstances in which she killed would never arise again. There was a paradox, therefore: for the greater crime meant the lesser danger, and the lesser crime the greater danger. But the greater crime carried a penalty of mandatory severity, which seemed disproportionate

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to the jury, and they could avoid it only by resort to intellectual dishonesty.

In my opinion, there was no question of personality disorder in the case of the young murderess. When I visited her in prison to prepare my report to the court, I discovered—to my own great surprise, I must confess—that far from being a person of bad character, she was of good character. Or perhaps I should say: would have been of good character, had someone offered her a little loving guidance earlier in her life. For if anyone could ever have blamed her upbringing for her crime, she could have. What was impressive about her—moving even—was her steadfast refusal to do so. She blamed herself, and herself alone.

Of mixed race, she was the youngest of three children by a man who deserted her mother immediately after her birth. Apparently he had been a violent wastrel, and, as is so often the case, the mother took up soon afterward with another man of the same type but even worse—a crack-smoking criminal who was in and out of prison. When at liberty, he neither worked nor provided for any of the children (her mother had a further two children by him, making five so far).

Jealous and possessive, he was extremely violent to her mother, accusing her of having had affairs with other men while he was in prison. He broke her jaw, her ribs, and her arm on separate occasions. Sometimes she would flee from him, taking the children with her to shelters, but either he would find her and intimidate her into returning, or she would grow nostalgic for his embraces and come back to him herself. It was hardly surprising in the circumstances that the killer-to-be's education was patchy. Thanks to her mother's attempts to evade her lover, followed by reconciliations both voluntary and involuntary, the girl attended almost as many schools as she had years of formal education.

One of the characteristics of relationships such as that between her mother and her stepfather is their all-consuming nature, at least for the woman. She can think of, and has time for, nothing else: she is the star, albeit the unhappy one, of her own mental soap opera. In this case, the mother noticed neither the stepfather's habitual violence toward her children by her former lover nor the fact that her oldest son was having intercourse with her daughter while the boy was between the ages of 13 and 17, and his sister was between the ages of eight and 12.

Eventually, her daughter, now 14, plucked up the courage to tell her what had happened. Her mother said she didn't believe her, flew into a rage, and threw her out of the house. She went to stay with a friend and then asked her mother whether she could return home. As a condition of doing so, her mother made her apologize to her brother and swear never to say anything like it again.

Her mother also failed to notice that, from the age of 12, her daughter had begun to drink heavily: or if she noticed it, she considered it a matter of no importance. Her daughter skipped school in order to drink; by the evening, she was often very drunk and soon got to the stage when she drank first thing in the morning to steady her shaking hands. She was also smoking marijuana. She said that she drank and smoked to obliterate the reality of her life, which was too awful to bear unaided.

When she was 15, she went herself to the Social Services department and asked to be taken away from her home, to escape its atmosphere of violence and intimidation. The department put her into a children's home, where an atmosphere of violence also prevailed: drug taking and sexual predation set the tone.

It was here that she formed a lesbian relationship with a 13-year-old who lived nearby. Neither the Social Services officials who ran the home nor the parents of the 13-year-old (who came from a background similar to her eventual killer's) were sufficiently in control to prevent the relationship from developing.

While the girl was in the children's home, her mother finally broke with the violent, criminal, crack-smoking stepfather and at once took up

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with a man 15 years her junior. She immediately "caught pregnant," as they say around here, and had her sixth child, whereupon her young lover did the usual thing in the circumstances and abandoned her to the care of the taxpayers. In the welfare state, experience teaches nothing.

Social Services regarded the killer-to-be, at the age of 16, as ready to stand on her own two feet, at least with regard to daily living, and gave her a furnished apartment of her own. She neither went to college—impossible because of her poor education—nor worked, since the various subventions she received, such as free rent and exemption from local taxes, made that not only unnecessary but uneconomic. So she spent her days in drunken and marijuana-intoxicated idleness, living intermittently with her underage lover. The two of them became the heroines of their own mental soap opera. Their quarrels and reconciliations became the focus of their whole existence, the very violence of their scenes being evidence (as far as they were concerned) of their importance and significance. And then one scene ended in murder.

When I went to see her in prison, the young killer was prey to the most profound remorse. It was several months after she had killed. She was obviously of good intelligence, though as badly educated as most in her station in life, despite the state's unprecedentedly large expenditures on free and compulsory education. She wept bitterly when speaking of her crime, but not self-pityingly. She had carved the name of her dead lover on her flesh, but in no exhibitionist or histrionic spirit. She said she wanted henceforth to be good, to behave well, for the sake of the deceased. She wanted to make something of herself, that she might travel, which had always been the ambition of her dead lover. She would never drink or smoke marijuana again.

She said that prison had done her much good; it was the first place in which she had ever felt truly settled. She was going to classes to improve her English and math. She had been treated well and fairly, and felt much better both physically and mentally. I checked with the staff: she was noted for her politeness and pleasant manner. This was just as I had found her.

Although she was distressed when, at my prompting, she recounted her life to me, she never attempted in the slightest degree to insinuate that her experiences were responsible for or explained her crime (although she was still only 18, they were surely far more than any person should ever have to experience). She said, "It's terrible that it had to come to this for me to take my own life seriously." She meant it, if anyone ever meant anything; and hers were not the words of someone with a serious personality disorder but on the contrary of someone with a surprisingly robust and decent character.

Toward the end of our very long interview, I asked her whether there was anything she wanted to ask me. She said that there was.

"What is it?" I inquired.

"Have you ever been to a trial before?" she said.

"Yes, many times."

"Can you tell me, will they be nasty to me?"

At this point, I felt a deep pang of sorrow: for her question was a child's question. For all the precocity forced upon her, for all the street credibility she had no doubt assumed for the sake of survival in the brutal urban environment in which she found herself, for all the pseudo-independence thrust upon her by her feckless mother and Social Services, she was still a child, not an adult.

As I left the prison, convinced that from the purely legal standpoint she had been guilty of murder and not of manslaughter, I pondered the question of why she had found prison so good, one might almost say so liberating, an experience. (She was far from unique in this regard, incidentally.)

The answer must be that for the first time in her life she was set limits: limits that, while imposed, were intrinsically reasonable and were not therefore arbitrary or dependent upon whim. Both keeping to those limits and breaking them produced entirely predictable consequences, good or bad. For the

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first time in her life, she had entered a world in which things made sense, in which brute power did not determine everything. As she might have put it herself, it was a pity that she had to go to prison to be treated with consistent decency.

The prison was a long way from my home, and as I drove I thought about the meaning of this terrible story. What would a liberal say about it? How would he explain what had happened? How would he go about trying to ensure that such cases did not recur?

Would he say that the state had been insufficiently generous with its social security payments, as a result of which the murderess had suffered material deprivations that caused her to commit her crime? But her mother had brought six children into the world, all by men who had contributed not a single penny to their upkeep. The murderess had never gone without food, was of notably strong physique, was of good stature, had never been ill, and had probably never even gone a day of her life without hot water. She was well clothed, and though she had never worked a single day of her life, her home boasted a stove, a refrigerator, a VCR, a stereo, and no doubt many other appurtenances that would have made Nero gasp. What more should the state have done or given her in the way of material goods?

Was she the victim of a restrictive sexual code that frustrated her desires and caused her to become violent? Surely even the most liberal of liberals would blush to say so. As she was incestuously raped from the age of eight to 12, and was herself able to take up a lesbian relationship with a girl aged 13 completely unopposed either by the state or by private individuals, it is difficult to see how further sexual license could have saved the day.

Had the educational system stifled her self-esteem? Quite the reverse. Our schools have fulfilled the liberal educators' every dream, abandoning educational achievement as their goal and systematically replacing it with nurturing self-esteem—or at least self-conceit—leaving their pupils unaware of their own disastrous ignorance, unable even to read properly, and without a counterweight to their chaotic home environments. Perhaps if the accused, and all the young people around her, had been treated with a firm but benevolent guiding hand when they were younger, the tragedy might have been averted.

Was the criminal justice system too harsh, above all on her stepfather? On her own account, he was never accused or found guilty of more than a very small fraction of the crimes that he had actually committed. Moreover, he was repeatedly released from prison, though he had provided irrefutable evidence that he had absolutely no intention of changing his mode of life. Had he been kept in prison for as long as he so manifestly deserved, there would have been at least the possibility that his "family" might have achieved a modicum of stability.

Was the problem that the killer was unable to obtain alcohol and marijuana easily enough? Had they been available to her freely, and free of charge, from (say) the age of six, would the tragedy have been averted?

Or perhaps she was released from the children's home at too tender an age? But the demand that adolescents be treated as autonomous adults has never been a conservative one, because it seems to conservatives to be not in accordance with human experience; rather, it is a liberal demand.

This murder, exceptional in some characteristics as it undoubtedly was, took place in a social universe that liberals have wrought, and whose realities they are too guilty or cowardly to acknowledge. It is a universe that has no place for children or childhood in it. Believing that man is the product of his environment, they have nevertheless set about creating an environment from which it is truly difficult to escape, by closing off all the avenues and boltholes as far as possible. They have destroyed the family and any notion of progress or improvement. They have made a world in which the only freedom is self-indulgence, a world from which—most terrible of all—prison can sometimes be a liberation.

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Letters

The Myth of the Systemic Obstacle

To the editor:

Steven Malanga's "The Myth of the Working Poor" [Autumn 2004] is a complex knot of misrepresentations and red herrings. Rather than giving thoughtful analysis of the texts in question, he supports his own "corporate-America-can-do-no-wrong" preconception with *ad hominem* attacks and selective, out-of-context citations.

Malanga unfairly characterizes David Shipler's *The Working Poor* as some kind of left-wing diatribe in favor of unrestrained welfare. Nothing could be further from the truth, and the level of intellectual dishonesty apparent in Malanga's work is unbecoming of such an otherwise respectable journal.

Why does Malanga accuse Shipler of advocating a welfare state when he clearly states precisely the opposite by documenting the hard work of organizations like So Others Might Eat in helping those otherwise locked in generational poverty navigate the unfamiliar waters of the upwardly mobile workplace? Why does Malanga cite Shipler's documentation of the bad decisions of individuals (dishonestly presenting them as unintentional revelations on Shipler's part), while completely ignoring his documentation of the corporate maliciousness and greed directed toward the poor in the form of sub-prime lending, "payday loans," and the like? Why does he accuse Shipler of unfairly trying to persuade people by his choice of chapter titles such as "Work Doesn't Work" (which actually comes from a quote made by one of the individuals he studied, rather than being his own conclusion)?

He concludes by writing, "To stay out of poverty in America, it's necessary to do three simple things, social scientists have found: finish high school, don't have kids until you marry, and wait until you are at least 20 to marry." What does Shipler propose can be done about individuals who have failed to do those "simple things"? What about those whom Shipler accurately describes as being born into generational poverty, who have been exposed to nothing but illegitimacy and truancy, with no examples to the contrary? The welfare state is certainly not the answer, but Malanga's uncompassionate ultra-conservatism, accompanied by a denial of the systemic obstacles to overcoming personal poverty and stopping its proliferation, leaves us with no other options than a ruthless social Darwinism that writes off the real working poor, or a proliferation of entitlement programs. Neither, in my opinion, is an acceptable solution.

Joe Roberts
Dallas, TX

To the editor:

Steven Malanga has done well with "The Myth of the Working Poor"; please keep hammering this point home.

I am a leading provider of Section-8 housing for the Denver Housing Authority. I see every day the devastation that government-subsidized programs cause the poor.

But is "poor" even the right word? Consider everything they receive: free rent; free food with food stamps; free health care, if they use a hospital and skip out on the bill (no one is turned away for not having health insurance); free water and utilities, if they choose not to work (and many work off the books, taking in a couple of thousand a month); most own cars, though few drive with auto insurance—you pay for it every time you write your premium check. When I pull their credit reports, they usually have a dozen items in collections. God only knows in what other ways they are stiffing society.

The Democratic Party knows that the more people they can get addicted to the welfare state, the more Democratic voters there will be in the future.

Mike Stein
Denver, CO

To the editor:

Steven Malanga's "The Myth of the Working Poor" is insightful, but it misses one of the basic flaws of *Nickel and Dimed*: Barbara Ehrenreich approaches the job market as a complete stranger in each region, with no local relationships—even considering it cheating when she occasionally calls up a friend. While it may be interesting to pose the question whether someone can start in a vacuum and survive, that is by no means a measure of a healthy economy. People have friends and family, and these bonds are what make life possible when

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GETTY IMAGES

all else goes wrong. Anyone who has no friends and family is indeed in trouble—but primarily because something has gone wrong socially, not economically. *Dan Kornfield*
Via e-mail

To the editor:

One reason many have problems getting a decent-paying job is that "schooling" has replaced education. Schools have naively assumed that students not attending college need only be trained to work with their hands, not with their minds. But an academic high school education has always been a prerequisite for vocational and technical education. That requirement is of even greater importance as manually operated controls of machine tools and other manufacturing processes have been replaced by computerized electronic devices. Without an academic high school education, graduates do not have the academic ability to complete a vocational and technical program to acquire the requisite skills and knowledge to qualify for the many high-paying jobs that are available. A good CNC (Computer Numerical Control) machinist with the ability to program, set up, and operate computerized machine tools can find employment paying between $15 and $20 an hour (check the classified ads in many major papers under "Machinist" with keyword "CNC").
Richard Becker
Broomfield, CO

Steven Malanga responds:

Joe Roberts accuses me of misrepresenting David Shipler's message; but perhaps Mr. Roberts himself is confused about the intent of *The Working Poor* because the book lacks the anti-bourgeois venom of Barbara Ehrenreich's works. Still, Shipler's message is very clear: since our current economic system does not work for the poor, massive government intervention is necessary.

In "Work Doesn't Work," the chapter that Mr. Roberts says I distort, Shipler says early on and quite directly that most jobs available to those bumped off welfare "paid low wages, offered no benefits, and *went nowhere*"; (emphasis added). Later, Shipler tells us that generational economic mobility—which allows someone to climb out of poverty in a lifetime—is disappearing from the U.S., so that most of the working poor are condemned to a lifetime of poverty. But there is overwhelming evidence, some of it cited in my story, that this is not the case. In the rare instance

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where Shipler tells us that work *does* work—in his profile of the Tran family—he opines that their success story is so rare that it is "no model at all, just an exception"; but abundant evidence exists that many Californians are following the Tran family up the economic ladder.

Mr. Roberts says that Shipler does not advocate a "welfare state"; this says more about Mr. Roberts's notion of what constitutes a welfare state than it does about Shipler's views. True, Shipler is not in the extreme socialist tradition of Ehrenreich and welfare-rights advocates who argue that the poor have a right to lifetime welfare benefits. Nonetheless, Shipler urges massive government intervention while simultaneously ignoring the billions of dollars of taxpayer money already spent so ineffectively on poverty programs. Among his solutions to help the poor: raising the minimum wage and enacting more generous living-wage laws in cities (despite the job-killing effects of these increases); more money on public education (with no reference to the vast per-pupil sums spent in cities like Washington D.C. and New York, whose schools fail to prepare students sufficiently for the opportunites—like those Mr. Becker describes—that surround them); and more funding for Head Start, social workers, health care, and on and on. Shipler approvingly cites a federal pilot program in which children around the country "were bombarded with attention from pediatricians, social workers, home visitors and others who monitored their health, referred families to services, provided education child care, and the like." Anything short of this kind of total government care represents a failure. Yet, as Mr. Stein suggests in his letter, we already provide an avalanche of aid to the poor, with failures as numerous as successes.

Shipler artfully tries to place himself above the current debate about welfare reform by saying that to solve the problem of the working poor, we must get beyond the ideological debate of liberalism versus conservatism. This is a typical rhetorical strategy these days—and perhaps Mr. Roberts falls for it. But in the final analysis, Shipler's prescriptions are nothing new.

Security Barriers

To the editor:

Thanks to Heather Mac Donald for her informative article "Homeland Security? Not Yet" [Autumn 2004]. However, the creation of the Department of Homeland Security has been a disaster. The clamor to give the FBI more authority and funding and to centralize federal law-enforcement functions is wrong. The bureau cannot handle what it has, let alone take on the customs functions. INS is a mess. And what does Bush do? He places officials from the INS and DEA in charge of customs. Mac Donald laments that there still isn't a centralized list of terrorists; maybe the question should be: What happened to the Customs Service TECS II system and its archived database of people entering our country? No one seems to give a damn.

Robert Sheridan
Via e-mail

To the editor:

Heather Mac Donald's "Homeland Security? Not Yet" was outstanding and covered every problem I have with the Department of Homeland Security—or Homeland Insecurity. As a military veteran with over 30 years' service with the U.S. Border Patrol, I have never seen such a massive invasion across our border with Mexico. Here in Arizona, there is a definite national security problem, ignored by both political parties. Thank you for a concise and well-researched article.

John W. Slagle
U.S. Border Patrol (Ret.)
Three Points, AZ

To the editor:

Thank you, Heather Mac Donald. My husband and I both work for a Texas police department and deal with illegal aliens every day. Now it seems that the majority of Congress is more afraid of the 9/11 Commission and victims' families than they are of terrorists. They skirted the issue of securing the borders and dealing with illegals' getting driver's licenses. They pacified the military's worries concerning real-time intel. It seems to have turned into a political game instead of real legislation to secure the U.S. Thank you for keeping their feet to the fire. It seems that is the only way

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citizens can get anything done to enhance our security.

Chris Waguespack
City of Clute Police Department
Clute, TX

To the editor:

Heather Mac Donald's recent article infuriates me! As a pilot with 39 years of worldwide experience, my sincere conviction is that we are a helpless giant, and this article confirms it. While our soldiers root out the monsters of Fallujah, we sit here helpless with our leaders asleep at the switch. It is only a matter of time before a dirty bomb, a suitcase nuke, or a biological attack hits an American city. Your article should be required reading for every political hack inside the Beltway.

Fred Moore
Via e-mail

To the editor:

Good article on how political correctness hampers U.S. national security.

Here in Canada, political correctness has killed people. Our Red Cross Society, afraid of possible allegations of discrimination, allowed homosexual men to donate blood—against the advice of its lawyers. Tens of thousands of people contracted Hepatitis B and C through transfusions. The matter is still before the courts.

David Mason
Via e-mail

Nurtured Evil?

To the editor:

Having read a good number of Theodore Dalrymple's articles, I listen to his opinions with respect and attention. I have lived a privileged and comfortable life and have rarely, if ever, met the sort of people whom he describes in "The Frivolity of Evil" [Autumn 2004]. I have studied history and read widely, though, and I wonder if he would agree that, rather than being born good or bad, human beings are born malleable and adaptive. As children, we learn to play the roles that paid off best for us. In a feral environment, that means having no better nature, being meaner, more selfish, and more merciless than others. In a privileged, loving environment, it usually means reciprocating: being good to others, as they are good to you. We do what has paid off in the past. The tragedy, I feel, is that after a certain age the mold gradually hardens—and that that age is a very young one.

Tom Welsh
Via e-mail

To the editor:

I grew up in Brixton in London. My front door looked out onto its famous prison. The changes that Theodore Dalrymple describes are tragic. The doctor has hit the nail squarely and resoundingly on its head. I hope it becomes a chorus rather than one voice in the wilderness.

Colin Mackenzie
Santa Cruz, CA

Theodore Dalrymple responds:

I have no definitive answer for Mr. Welsh. I think family and cultural and political conditions can certainly favor the development and spread of evil, but I also think that evil is a permanent human possibility, and have known many cases where its development is not explicable by reference to any external conditions whatever.

A Modest Proposal

To the editor:

With regard to "Dads in the 'Hood," by Kay S. Hymowitz [Autumn 2004]: we as a people are responsible for the disintegration of the black family. In promoting government programs that gave people money according to their needs, we stripped them of motivation. We didn't do this because they were black. We did it because they were poor.

If you question my hypothesis, I propose a simple experiment that we can perform to prove it. With your approval, I will send each of your children a $500 check every week. This will ruin them as surely as our poor citizens have been ruined by government largesse. Your children will develop all the problems we see in the poor communities in America. Worse yet, I could do it without your approval, and I could refuse to stop it no matter how much you implore me to.

Roy Grossman
Via e-mail

Uh, Nothing's the Matter with Kansas

To the editor:

Steven Malanga is spot-on in his analysis of Thomas Frank's *What's the Matter with Kansas?* ["What's the Matter

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with Thomas Frank?" Soundings, Autumn 2004]. I grew up in Johnson County, Kansas, left for several years to live in South Florida, and (I hope you're listening, Thomas Frank) *chose* to come back here to Johnson County to raise my kids. My choice to move here is precisely because of what's *right* with Kansas in general and Johnson County specifically.

Mr. Malanga certainly understands that Frank's analysis is condescending, convenient (you can imagine the thought process: "It's Kansas: I can embellish at will, because my liberal pals have never been there"), and doesn't let the facts get in the way of a good story. If you'd ever like to know just how wrong he is, I'd be glad to tell you—and him, for that matter.

Rick Burgess
Via e-mail

To the editor:

Great article. A must-read for anyone caught up in the Red state–Blue state syndrome.

I don't know what Frank is smoking, but it has to be illegal.

Ken Gott
Leavenworth, KS

¡Habana Libre!

To the editor:

I cried as I read Theodore Dalrymple's magnificent and utterly painful article, "Why Havana Had to Die" [Summer 2002]. From the bottom of my heart: thank you so much.

I cannot ever recall a non-Cuban discovering the simple truth about Castro and describing it so objectively. Havana (as well as the rest of Cuba) had to be destroyed by that megalomaniacal psychopath and his gang of thugs. Perhaps other reasons could be added for this otherwise unexplainable madness: deeply entrenched resentment toward that magnificent city and its inhabitants; his warped and twisted personality; his class hatred because of his bastard origin. In any case, Dalrymple's article somehow manages to restore that city's hope and dignity, long lost in the middle of so much pain, humiliation, and embarrassment. Thank you.

Luis M. Valdivieso
Via e-mail

Subjected to Sondheim

To the editor:

I want to thank Stefan Kanfer for his interesting and well-written "Sondheim vs. Sondheim" [Autumn 2004].

My husband adores Sondheim, so I am subjected to him on a regular basis. I don't deny his extraordinary talent; I just always feel as if I've been dragged through the sewer by his songs and books.

Variety's review of *Company*, while crude, was true: "Sondheim's songs proved 'undistinguished'; furthermore, it was 'evident that the author, George Furth, hates femmes and makes them all out to be conniving, cunning, cantankerous, and cute. . . . As it stands now, it's for ladies' matinees, homos, and misogynists.'"

Perhaps Sondheim's repeated failures stem from the fact that, while many people enjoy bathing in his intellectualism, most of them are put off by his worldview: his misogyny, his moral relativism, his obsession with death and filth, and his belief—unsurprising, given his mother—that all people are basically morally soiled. Yuck.

Andrea Widburg
Via e-mail

A Fundamental Difference

To the editor:

In "I Wed Thee, and Thee, and Thee" [Soundings, Autumn 2004], Kay S. Hymowitz refers to Principle Voices of Polygamy as "a Mormon group."

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints does not support or condone efforts to legalize polygamy. In fact, the church supports federal and state marriage amendments defining marriage as between "one man and one woman."

The group to which you refer evidently thinks of itself as "fundamentalist Mormon." We encourage journalists and authors to follow the Associated Press style guide, which discourages the use of "Mormon" for any group other than the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

We bring this to your attention in a spirit of helpfulness.

Michael Otterson
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

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Contributors

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Theodore Dalrymple, a physician, is a contributing editor of *City Journal* and the Dietrich Weismann Fellow at the Manhattan Institute. His forthcoming book, *Our Culture, What's Left of It,* is a collection of his *City Journal* essays.

Nicole Gelinas, a Chartered Financial Analyst, is a journalist who covers international financial markets for Thomson Financial and contributes regularly to the *New York Post*.

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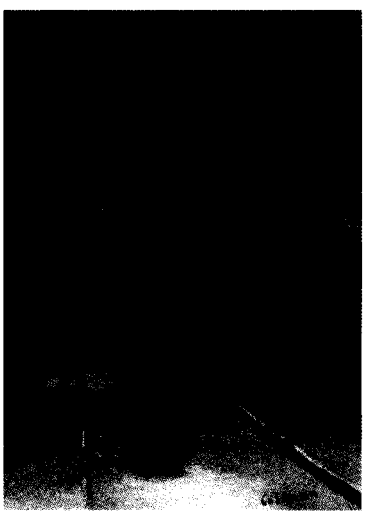

Minetta Lane [New York City], oil on canvas, by Glenn O. Coleman (1884–1932) Musée de la coopération franco-américaine, Blérancourt, France/Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY

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Winning Hearts and Minds?

Steven E. Moore

I was supposed to meet with democracy activist Fern Holland on the March day that terrorists ran her car off the road south of Baghdad and shot her many times with AK-47s. All the networks and dozens of newspapers covered her death, and Paul Wolfowitz noted it in congressional testimony. Fern's dedication to democracy was a catalyst that has helped make Iraq's south central region a leader in the country's painful move to self-government.

Less recognized but equally deserving was Fern's deputy Salwa, a 38-year-old Iraqi killed in the same attack. She was just one of the thousands of Iraqis working with the Coalition to bring democracy and stability to their country—Iraqis who have lived under the constant threat of death from insurgents. I first met Salwa at a talk I gave to an Iraqi human rights group. She shared Fern's vision of an Iraq where women had the same say in government that men did. Salwa and her sister Noor sat with me after the event, listening to Bob Marley on my laptop's tiny speakers. I later hired Noor as a translator.

The morning after the attack, one of Fern's colleagues e-mailed me the crushing news. Noor sat in the next room. In the U.S., highway patrol officers, doctors, and clergy have the grim duty of notifying families of the death of loved ones. Even in Iraq, I assumed, the Iraqi equivalent of the highway patrol must have notified Salwa's family, and Noor had missed it in coming to work. It fell to me to tell her.

There's no good way to do it. We used pretense to bring Noor downstairs to a car, told her in the car, and then drove her home. Once we got there, it was clear that the family didn't yet know. Noor's mother greeted me as she would a son. By hiring Salwa, she felt, I was helping both her family and her country. I stammered the dreadful news, while Noor's mother, brothers, sisters, cousins—more than a dozen family members hanging around the house—listened to her translate.

Noor stopped working for me to take care of her mother, already shattered from the loss of another daughter, earlier, to cancer. Noor asked if the Coalition gave death benefits to those killed "while helping the Americans." To find out, I began visiting the dozens of palaces, formerly home to Saddam's cousins or tribesmen, that now serve as bureaucrats' offices.

Eventually, I learned that her likely employer was KBR, a Halliburton subsidiary working for the Coalition on construction and other tasks. It proved easier to meet with Ambassador Bremer than with KBR's Iraq head of operations, who failed to show for two scheduled meetings. Finally, I just hung around his office until he made an appearance.

I learned from him that one of KBR's Iraqi subcontractors had hired Salwa and that death benefits, if any, would have to come from it. KBR did its Iraqi hiring through subcontractors so as to avoid liability in situations like these. As for the head of the subcontracting firm, the latest that KBR knew was that Coalition forces had arrested and released him (for what was unclear) and that he had probably skipped town. A Bremer aide worked on this problem after I left Iraq, and met with similar success.

I understand the economic rationale for firms to mitigate risk when employing foreign workers. Yet while KBR's strategy might be justifiable when it hires laborers to build, say, a gas pipeline in Nigeria, where winning over the Nigerian people isn't the key aim, it's truly counterproductive in Iraq.

The terrorists have the business end of things in Iraq figured out much better than we do: they reward suicide bombers' families handsomely. Salwa's family had just found out that if an Iraqi gets killed working for the Coalition, he or she gets nothing.

Seven of Salwa's extended family worked for the Coalition as translators, drivers, and security guards. Families are closer in Iraq than in the U.S., and it's not unusual for even third cousins to talk often. To save a few thousand bucks, then, KBR likely sent the message to hundreds of Iraqis inclined to support U.S. efforts in Iraq that we won't stand by them when things go wrong.

That's no way to win Iraqi hearts and minds.

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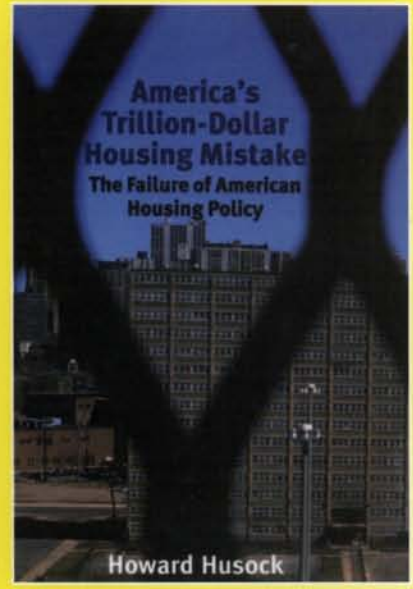

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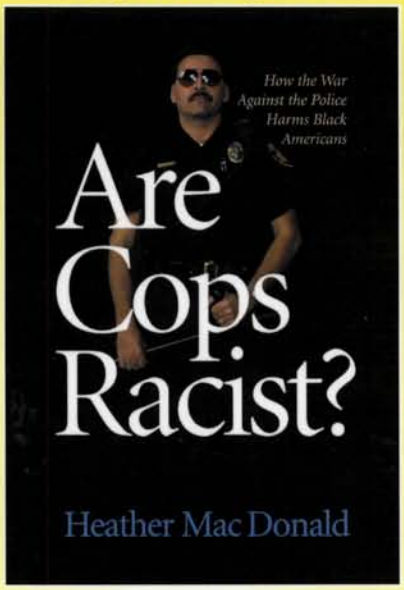

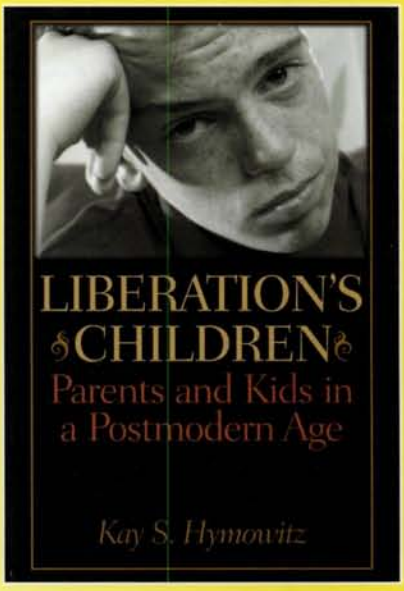

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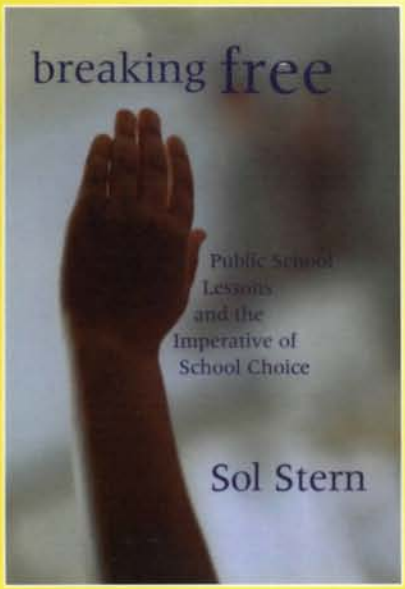

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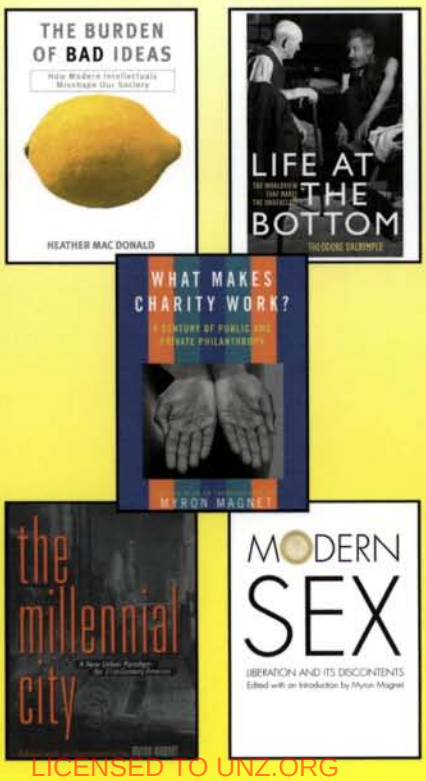

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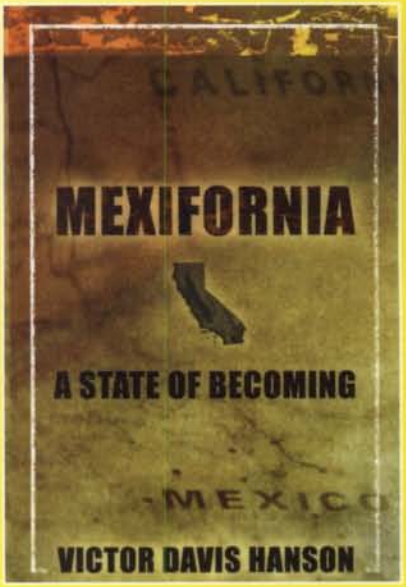

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